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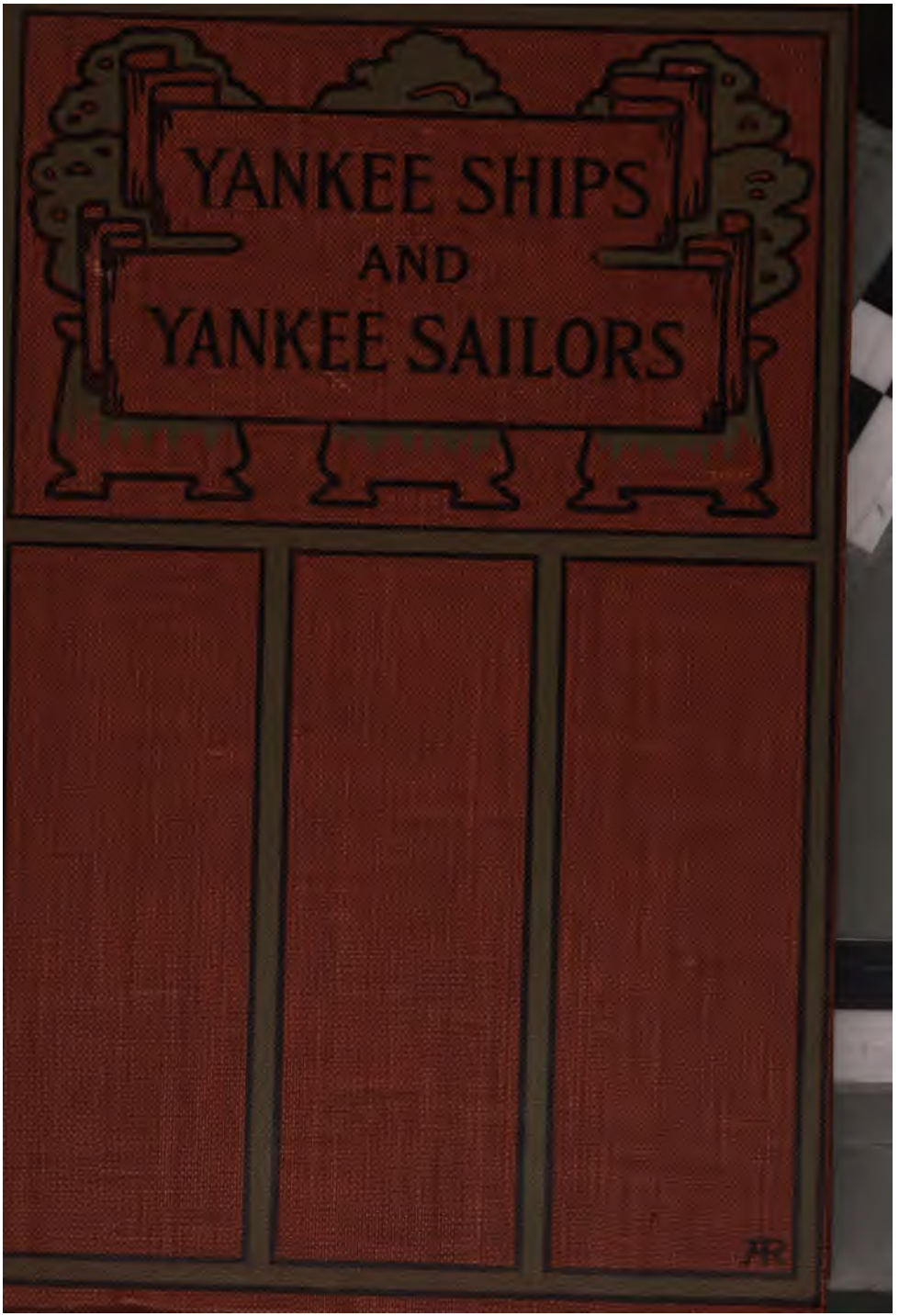
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AND
YANKEE SAILORS

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YANKEE SHIPS AND YANKEE SAILORS:—TALES OF 1812


The MMC Co.

Yankee Ships and Yankee Sailors: — Tales of 1812

By

James Barnes

Author of "Naval Engagements of the War of 1812"
"A Loyal Traitor," "For King or Country," etc.

With Numerous Illustrations by
R. F. Zogbaum and Carlton T. Chapman

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To my Brother



PREFACE

IN presenting this volume of "Tales of 1812" it is not the intention of the author to give detailed accounts of actions at sea or to present biographical sketches of well-known heroes; he wishes but to tell something of the ships that fought the battles, whose names are inseparably connected with a glorious past, and to relate incidents connected with the Yankee sailors who composed their crews — "A Yankee Ship and a Yankee Crew" — thus runs the old song; it is to exploit both in a measure that is the intention of this book. Brave fellows, these old-time Jackies were. Their day has gone by with the departed day also, of the storm-along captains, the men who carried sail in all sorts of weather, who took their vessels through dangerous passages unmarked by buoys, with only the fickle wind to drive them, who sailed into the enemy's cruising-grounds, and counting on the good Yankee pine and live oak, had perilous escapes and adventures which fiction cannot exaggerate. It stirs one's blood to read of these. Surely, it will not arouse a hatred for by-gone enemies, to hark back to them.

are part of the nation's record, and their ships exist now in the shape of a few old hulls. We can mark how carefully and strongly they were constructed; we can imagine them swarming with men and quivering beneath the thunder of broadsides. The author has tried to put the sailor back upon his ship again. Here we have the old tales now retold; retold by one who loves to listen to them, therefore to talk about them. This is his prologue to the telling, and that is all there is to it.

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ALLEN, OF THE *CHESAPEAKE*

ALLEN, OF THE *CHESAPEAKE*

GIVE a ship an unlucky name, and it will last throughout the whole of her career. A sailor is proverbially superstitious, and he clings jealously to tradition.

It is told that when the frigate *Chesapeake* was launched she stuck fast on the ways, and did not reach the water until the following day, which was Friday. Although she was a fine vessel to look at, she grounded upon the bar upon her first attempt to sail, and, when once free, behaved herself in such a lubberly fashion that those who witnessed her starting out declared she was bewitched. Even after many changes had been made in the length of her masts, in the weight of spars, and the cut of sails, still she was considered by many a failure. And, although her sailing qualities improved as time went on, yet her bad name stuck to her, as bad names will.

Given this drawback, the unlucky captain of such a craft finds it difficult to recruit a proper crew, and must often be content with green hands, or the riffraff disdained by other ships' masters.

Commodore James Barron, who had been ordered to the *Chesapeake*, was a brave officer. He had succeeded the peppery Commodore Preble in command of the fleet that had so successfully negotiated the operations before Tripoli, and there he had won for himself a name and reputation. Nevertheless, he was not entirely popular with his officers. They failed to find in him the graciousness of manner and deportment, the strict adherence to the lines of duty, and yet the kindliness of thought and conduct that distinguished young Captain Bainbridge; and they missed, strange to say, the iron hand and stern rule of Preble, the martinet.

Just before sailing from the Capes to relieve the *Constitution* on the Mediterranean station, the *Chesapeake* had recruited, from Delaware and Maryland, a green crew. Not above fifty of her complement were men-of-warsmen. Perhaps one hundred more had seen service in deep-sea craft, and had made long cruises; but the rest, numbering probably one hundred and fifty, were longshoremen or landsmen. Lying inside the mouth of Chesapeake Bay were several British men-of-war. As was usual when in American ports, they were compelled to watch their crews most closely, for the higher pay and the better treatment, which cannot be denied, had tempted many an impressed seaman to leave his ship, and take refuge under the American flag.

It was claimed by Vice-Admiral Berkeley in command of the English fleet, that four British sailors had deserted from the *Melampus*, and joined Barron's frigate. The following correspondence passed between Robert Smith, the Secretary of the Navy at Washington, and Commodore Barron, in relation to the matter. It explains in the best way possible, how affairs stood at the outset.

WASHINGTON, April 6, 1807.

To Commodore James Barron: —

SIR: It has been represented to me that William Ware, Daniel Martin, John Strachan, John Little, and others, deserters from a British ship of war at Norfolk, have been entered by the recruiting officer at that place for our service. You will be pleased to make full inquiry relative to these men (especially, if they are American citizens), and inform me of the result. You will immediately direct the recruiting officer in no case to enter deserters from British ships of war.

ROBT. SMITH.

To this letter Commodore Barron made haste to reply, and the following is taken *verbatim* from his note to the Secretary: —

"William Ware was pressed from on board the brig *Neptune*, Captain Crafts, by the British frigate, *Melampus*, in the Bay of Biscay (in 1805). . . . He is a native American, born at Bruce's Mills, on Pipe Creek, in the

county of Frederick, Maryland, and served his time at said mills. He also lived at Ellicot's Mills, near Baltimore, and drove a waggon several years between Hagerstown and Baltimore. He also served eighteen months on board the U. S. frigate, *Chesapeake*, under the command of Captain Morris and Captain J. Barron. He is an Indian-looking man.

"Daniel Martin was impressed at the same time and place; a native of Westport, in Massachusetts, about thirty miles to the eastward of Newport, Rhode Island; served his time out of New York with Captain Marrowby of the *Caledonia;* refers to Mr. Benjamin Davis, merchant, and Mr. Benjamin Corse, of Westport. He is a colored man.

"John Strachan, born in Queen Ann's County, Maryland, between Centreville and Queenstown; sailed in the brigantine *Martha Bland*, Captain Wyvill, from Norfolk to Dublin, and from thence to Liverpool. He then left the vessel and shipped on board an English Guineaman; he was impressed on board the *Melampus*, off Cape Finisterre; to better his condition he consented to enter, being determined to make his escape when opportunity offered; he served on board said frigate two years; refers to Mr. John Price and —— Pratt, Esq., on Kent Island, who know his relatives. He is a white man, about five feet seven inches high.

"William Ware and John Strachan have protections.[1] Daniel Martin says he lost his after leaving the frigate.

"John Little, *alias* Francis and Ambrose Watts, escaped from the *Melampus* at the same time, are known to the

[1] Papers proving their American citizenship.

above persons to be Americans, but have not been entered by my recruiting officer."

The foregoing proves beyond all manner of doubt what ground Commodore Barron had in taking the stand he did further on in the proceedings. But Admiral Berkeley was a very proud, obstinate man. His feelings had been hurt by the refusal of the Yankee commodore to give up his men, and he bided his time.

On Monday, June 22, 1807, the *Chesapeake* put to sea with her ill-assorted and undisciplined crew. In the harbor of Lynnhaven lay the British squadron under the command of Commodore Douglass, acting under the orders of Vice-Admiral Berkeley. It consisted of the *Bellona*, seventy-four, the *Triumph*, seventy-four, the *Leopard*, fifty, and the *Melampus*, thirty-eight. Why it was that the *Leopard* was selected for the work which was to follow, is easy to surmise. Vice-Admiral Berkeley had determined, at all hazards, to search the American vessel to ascertain if she had in her complement those "British seamen" who had deserted from the fleet. Barron's refusal to allow a search made of his vessel while she was in port had been backed up by the United States Government. This had exceedingly exasperated the English commander, and he determined to wait until the *Chesapeake* was at sea before putting

his cherished project into practice. As soon as the *Chesapeake* set sail, the *Leopard* was despatched to bring her to. The *Melampus* was not sent because she was too near the *Chesapeake's* armament, and resistance might be successfully made to any attempt at high-handed interference. Nor did he take the trouble to despatch one of his seventy-fours, which might have brought the *Chesapeake* under her guns, and compelled her to submit by the law that "might makes right"; but the *Leopard* was sent because she was just large enough to insure success, and yet to humble the American from the mere fact that he must inevitably yield to a vessel to which he should by rights make some resistance.

It was a calm day with just enough wind to move the ships through the water. The *Leopard*, that had really got under way first, overhauled the smaller vessel, after a few hours' sailing. At three o'clock, when forty-five miles off shore, she hove to across her bows, and the slight wind that had wafted them from the Capes died away almost at the moment. Hailing the American ship's captain, Humphreys stated that he would like to send despatches by her—a privilege always accorded one friendly nation by another.

On the *Chesapeake's* deck, chatting with the officers, were two lady passengers, who were bound with four or five gentlemen passengers for the Straits.

Part of the cabin had been allotted to the use of the ladies and their maids. As they had come on board at a late hour, their trunks and luggage were yet on the deck. Amicable relations existed between America and England, and there was nothing especially unfriendly in the attitude of the English frigate, although her action excited much comment on board the ship, and gave rise to many surmises. Captain Barron was on the quarter-deck, when news was brought to him that the *Leopard* had lowered a boat with an officer in it, and that it was making for the *Chesapeake's* side. The ladder was dropped, the side boys were piped to the gangway, and Barron himself stepped forward to greet the Lieutenant, extending his hand and welcoming him graciously. Standing close by was Dr. John Bullus, a passenger, the newly-appointed consul to the Island of Minorca, and the naval agent to the United States naval squadron in the Mediterranean.

"Captain Humphreys' compliments," began the Lieutenant. "And he requires the privilege of searching this vessel for deserters."

"What are their names, may I ask?" inquired Barron.

The officer replied, reading from a list he carried in his hand, but describing the men as subjects of "His Majesty, King George."

When he had finished, Barron frowned.

"There has been a careful and full inquiry into the cases of these seamen," he said at last, "and after a minute investigation into the circumstances, the British Minister, Mr. Erskine, is perfectly satisfied on the subject, inasmuch as these men were American citizens, impressed by officers of the *Melampus*. This gentleman," turning to Dr. Bullus, "our naval agent, is particularly acquainted with all the facts and circumstances relative to the transaction. He received his information from the highest possible source."

"From none less than the Honorable Robert Smith, the Secretary of our Navy," put in Dr. Bullus, "and I am most willing to go on board the *Leopard* and inform your commander to that effect, Mr. Erskine—"

"I do not recognize Mr. Erskine in this business," interrupted the young Lieutenant arrogantly. "Nor do I wish to talk with any one but Captain Barron. There is much more to be said."

Barron took the doctor to one side. "You will pardon me for placing you in a position to receive such an insult. I did not suppose it possible."

"Make no mention of it," was the return; "I understand." With that the agent walked away.

The Englishman could not have helped noticing the confusion upon the American's decks. The crew were engaged under the direction of the petty offi-

cers in coiling away the stiff, new running-gear and cables, men with paint-pots and brushes were touching up the bulwarks and paint work; others were polishing the brass; and it was altogether a peaceful scene that struck his eye, even if the presence of the ladies had not added the finishing touch.

On the quarter-deck, leaning carelessly against the railing, was a young officer, Lieutenant William Henry Allen, third in rank. He was but twenty-three years of age, a tall, boyish-looking fellow, with beautiful features, clear eye and complexion, and ruddy cheeks. He noticed the glance the English officer had given, and his face clouded. He was near enough to hear what passed between Barron and the Lieutenant.

"It is of such importance," went on the latter, continuing his previous remarks, "that I should desire to speak to you in private, sir. If we could but retire to your cabin —"

"With the greatest pleasure in the world," Barron returned, indicating that the Lieutenant should precede him; and with that they disappeared from view. Once seated at the cabin table, the Englishman broached the subject without preamble.

"Commodore Douglass," he began, "is fully determined to recover the deserters that are now harbored on board this ship. It is my desire to warn you that it is best that you submit to a peace-

able search, and in return my commanding officer will permit you to do the same, and if any of your men are found in our complement, you are welcome to take them with you. This should bear great weight in helping you to form your decision. Here is his letter."

Captain Barron took the paper, broke the seal, and read as follows: —

The Commander of H. B. Majesty's ship, "Leopard," to the Captain of the U. S. ship, "Chesapeake": —

AT SEA, June 22d, 1807.

The Captain of H. B. Majesty's ship, *Leopard*, has the honor to enclose the Captain of the U. S. ship, *Chesapeake*, an order from the Honorable Vice-Admiral Berkeley, Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's ships on the North American Station, respecting some deserters from the ships (therein mentioned) under his command, and supposed to be now serving as part crew of the *Chesapeake*.

The Captain of the *Leopard* will not presume to say anything in addition to what the commander-in-chief has stated, more than to express a hope that every circumstance respecting them may be adjusted in a manner that the harmony subsisting between the two countries may remain undisturbed.

"As I before remarked," said the Lieutenant, noting that Barron had finished the letter, "Captain

Humphreys offers you the privilege of a mutual search."

Captain Barron smiled. The idea that he should find any of his own men serving on board King George's vessel was rather amusing.

"I have missed none of my crew," he said quietly, "and, while grateful for the privilege, I do not desire to make use of it."

"And your answer?" broke in the Lieutenant.

"You will take this letter, that I shall write, to Captain Humphreys, give him my best compliments, and of course inform him that I regret that I can neither avail myself of his courtesy, nor with honor can I permit a search to be made of my vessel."

"As you decide," returned the Lieutenant, sententiously.

For some minutes nothing was heard from the cabin. Barron was busily employed in inditing the epistle, and when it was delivered, the two officers came out together.

The following is a copy of the letter to Captain Humphreys: —

To the Commander of His Majesty's ship, "Leopard": —

At Sea, June 22d.

I know of no such men as you describe. The officers that were on the recruiting service for this ship were particularly instructed by my government through me not to

enter any deserters from H. B. Majesty's ships. Nor do I know of any being here. I am also instructed never to permit the crew of any ship under my command to be mustered by any other than their own officers. It is my disposition to preserve harmony, and I hope this answer to your despatch will prove satisfactory.

J. BARRON.

The Englishman was escorted to the side, and once in his boat, his crew, as if urged to special exertion, made all haste to gain their ship.

Allen turned and spoke to Benjamin Smith, the First Lieutenant. "I do not like the look of things," he said.

"Nor I," responded Smith, advancing toward the Captain, who had stopped to speak to one of the lady passengers. He saluted his commander, and speaking in a low voice, he suggested the propriety of asking the ladies to retire below, and of clearing ship.

"Tut, tut," replied Barron, carelessly; "you are over-nervous, Mr. Smith. My letter to Captain Humphreys will convince him that our actions are perfectly proper and peaceable, while any movement to prove to the contrary might lead him to suppose that I wished to precipitate some trouble. Nothing will occur, I warrant you."

"Had we not better open the magazines, sir?" asked Captain Gordon, coming up at this moment.

"It is not necessary," Barron returned, and once more joined the ladies.

The keys of the magazine are always kept in the possession of the ship's captain, and by him they are handed to the gunner, and are never delivered to any one else. As was customary, the *Chesapeake's* broadside guns were loaded and shotted, for a ship generally sailed with them in this state of preparation; but they were not primed, and but thirteen powder horns had been made ready, and they were locked safe in the magazine. Around the foremast and in the cable tiers were plenty of wads and sponges, and ready on deck, before each gun, was a box of canister. But there were no matches prepared for service.

The peaceful work went on. The crew continued touching up the paint work, and in the sunlight the brass shone brightly. From the galley came the clatter of dishes, and from below came the sound of a sea-song, chanted by one of the men off watch.

Barron called Captain Gordon to him on the quarter-deck. "Captain," said he, "I think that fellow yonder hailed us a moment since; I could not make out what he said however. Perhaps we had better send the men to their stations quietly."

"Very good, sir," returned the Captain, and he strolled forward leisurely, for he, like Barron, suspected no surprise.

Allen had left the quarter-deck and had stepped forward to speak to Mr. Brooks, the sailing-master. They stopped at the entrance to the galley, which was in a caboose or deckhouse. Suddenly Lieutenant Smith looked out across the water at the *Leopard*, that was swinging lazily along at about the distance of a pistol shot.

Surely he could not be mistaken. The muzzle of one of the forward guns was slewing around to bear upon the ship. Probably they were just exercising; but there! another followed suit, and then three more, as if moved by one command. His face blanched. What could it mean? But one thing! He whirled and saw that Barron had gone below to his cabin. Rushing to the ladies, he grasped them by the arms and having hardly time to make explanations, he hurried them to the companionway.

"Below as far as you can go! Down to the hold!" he cried. "Don't stop; don't talk!"

As he spoke he could scarce believe his eyes. A burst of white smoke, with a vivid red dash of flame from the centre, broke from the forward gun on the *Leopard's* main deck. There was a crash just abaft the break of the forecastle. A great splinter fully six feet long whirled across the deck. The shock was felt throughout the ship. A man who had been painting the bulwarks fell to his knees, arose,

and fell again. His shoulder and one arm were almost torn away; his blood mingled with the paint from the overturned pot. He shrieked out in fright and agony.

"Beat to quarters!" roared Lieutenant Smith.

Up from below the men came tumbling. Barron ran from his cabin, with his face as white as death. "To quarters!" he roared, echoing the Lieutenant's order.

Everything was confusion. The men gathered at the useless guns. The belated drummer began to sound the roll. Hither and thither rushed officers and midshipmen. The green hands stood gawking about; some overcome by fear and the suddenness of danger, plunged down the companionway. Where were the matches? Where were the priming horns? Barron turned to go to his cabin for the keys to the magazine. They were locked in the drawer of his heavy desk, and now there came another shot. It struck fair in the bulwarks, and the hammocks and their contents were thrown out of the nettings. Three men were wounded by the shower of splinters. And not a shot was fired yet in return.

"Matches! give us the matches!" roared some of the men at the guns, as they tried to bring their harmless weapons to bear upon the Englishman.

A deadly broadside struck the helpless *Chesapeake*.

Blocks and spars fell from aloft. Suddenly from the entrance of the deckhouse ran a hatless figure. Men made way for him. It was Lieutenant Allen! His jaws were set and his eyes were glaring. Tossing between his hands, as a juggler keeps a ball in the air, was a red hot, flaming coal.

"Here, sir!" cried one of the gunner's mates. "This one's primed, sir. For God's sake, here, sir!"

Just as Allen reached forward, a shot from the *Leopard* struck the opening of the port. The man who had spoken was hit full in the breast. Five of the eight surrounding the piece fell to the deck, wounded by the murderous splinters. But Allen dropped his flaming coal upon the breech of the gun, and pushed into place with his scorched and blackened fingers.

It was the lone reply to the Englishman's dastardly gun practice! For fifteen minutes the *Leopard* fired steadily by divisions.

Covered with blood that had been dashed over him from the body of the man the round shot had killed, Allen ran aft. The ship was full of groans and shrieks and cursing. Forth from the cabin came Barron. He looked an aged, heart-broken man. When he saw the young Lieutenant, he stepped back a pace in horror. The scene of carnage on the deck unnerved him.



"It was Lieutenant Allen!"



"The keys! the keys!" shrieked Allen, almost springing at his commander's throat. "Let us fight, if we must die!"

The thought that flashed through Barron's mind must have been the uselessness of resistance, the terrible death and destruction, and the inevitable loss that would be sure to follow. Almost resting himself upon the group of officers, he raised both hands above his head, the palms open and outstretched.

"Haul down the flag!" he ordered faintly.

A sailor, standing near by, caught the words and springing to the halliards, down it came, tangling almost into a knot, as if to hide its folds. The *Leopard* ceased her murderous work; but the confusion was great on board the *Chesapeake*. Men wept like babies. Wounded men were being carried below. Curses and imprecations on the English flag and on the distant ship rent the air. Many openly cursed their own commander.

"Tell him to come here, and look at this!" cried an old sailor, pointing to one dead body on the deck. "Then will he lower the flag? Give us a chance, for God's sake, to fight like men!"

Barron had hurried into the cabin.

"Send for the officers of the ship." They were all there to a man, except the surgeon, who was busy down below. "Your opinions, gentlemen," he faltered. There was not a sound. Captain

Gordon was silent. Tears were rolling down the First Lieutenant's cheeks. He tried to speak, and could not.

"Sir, you have disgraced us!"

It was Allen speaking. To save his life he could not have helped blurting out what he felt to be the truth. Barron spread out his arms weakly, then dropped his head into his hands. It was then presumed that he was wounded also, for blood was running down his wrists. They left him there.

What use the rest of the story? The search was made, four men were taken. All claimed to be Americans; they were prepared to prove it. Captain Humphreys refused to accept the surrender of the vessel. Barron, hitherto known as brave and capable, was dishonored and relieved from all command, was sentenced to five years retirement without pay. Oh yes, the British Admiral was sentenced also. Of course the Board of Admiralty could not recognize such doings. They even made apologies and all the rest of it, and returned two of the men, all there were left, for one was hanged and another died. They sentenced their Vice-Admiral with a smile of covert approval, and they promoted him shortly afterwards.

The unfortunate officers who had been innocent parties to the surrender felt keenly their position. They could not go through explanations to every

one. They became morbidly sensitive upon the subject. No less then seven duels grew out of the affair, and Allen, who had fired the gun, wrote to his father thus: "If I am acquitted honorably, if Captain Barron is condemned, you may see me again. If not, never." — Poor Allen! No disgrace shall ever be attached to his name. He died of wounds received while bravely fighting on the deck of his own little vessel, the *Argus*, some years later, and he was buried in foreign soil by a guard of honor of his enemies, who appreciated his bravery and worth.

As for the *Chesapeake*, her bad name clung to her. And of her end, there is much more to tell that will be told. But "Remember the *Chesapeake*" became a watchword. This was the beginning, that was the beginning of the end.



REUBEN JAMES, ABLE SEAMAN



REUBEN JAMES, ABLE SEAMAN

THIS is a story that has oft been told before. But in history, if a man becomes famous by one act, and be that act something worth recording, it will stand being told about again. So if this be an old yarn, this is the only apology for the spinning, and here goes for it: —

Reuben James may be well remembered by men who are yet living, for he died but some fifty years ago. He was born in the state of Delaware, of the good old "poor but honest" stock. Sailor boy and man was Reuben, with a vocabulary limited to the names of things on shipboard and the verbs to pull and haul. He went to sea at the age of thirteen years, and in 1797, when only a lad of sixteen, although he had already made three or four cruises of some length, he was captured by a French privateer during the quasi-war between this country and the citizen Republic of France. Upon his liberation, Reuben made up his mind to serve no longer in the merchant service, but to ship as soon as possible in the best frigate that flew our flag; and as his imprisonment lasted but some five or six months, he soon found opportunity for revenge

Upon returning to the States he was fortunate enough to find the old *Constellation* in port picking up her crew. This was in the year 1799, and the old ship was then in command of the intrepid Commodore Truxtun, and he was her commander when she gave such a drubbing to the French frigates *Insurgente* and *Vengeance*, which taught the citizens a lesson, and brought to an end, as much as any other thing, the ridiculous situation of two nations not actually at war fighting one another at sea whenever they met. In these actions young James distinguished himself. He was by nature fearless to the verge of recklessness, and he was probably in trouble, on account of his devil-may-care propensities, more than once. In 1804, he sailed in the frigate *United States* to the Mediterranean, and when young Stephen Decatur sailed into the harbor and successfully destroyed the captured frigate *Philadelphia*, which the Tripolitans had anchored beneath their batteries, Reuben James was one of the first to volunteer. He returned from the successful accomplishment of the design, impressed with the young leader's courage and magnetism, and as often is the case between a beloved officer and the man who serves under him, there grew up in the young sailor's heart—he and Decatur were about the same age—a wild desire to do something to prove his devotion. The affection of brave men for one an-

other leads to deeds of noble self-sacrifice, and Reuben James's chance was to come. Every time that he was assigned to boat duty in the many skirmishes and little actions, before the harbor of Tripoli, Reuben succeeded in going in Decatur's boat, and one day to his delight he was promoted to be cockswain, which must have proved that Decatur's keen eye had noticed him.

On the 3d of August, 1804, early in the morning, the orders were sent throughout Commodore Preble's fleet to prepare for a general attack to take place as soon as it was broad daylight. The American force consisted of the *Constitution* and a number of gunboats of the same style and size as those composing the Tripolitan forces. Everything was ready on time, but the lack of wind prevented the action from taking place until late in the afternoon, when the *Constitution*, preceded by three of the American gunboats, entered the harbor. There were nine of the Bey's crack vessels, composing the eastern wing, waiting not far from shore. The three Yankee gunboats bore down upon them without hesitation, in gallant style. In slap-bang fashion, they sailed right into the Tripolitans and captured, cutlass in hand, the three leading ones. The other six fled and came plashing up the harbor, working their heavy sweeps for all they were worth.

A few minutes after their retreat, one of the other

vessels that, to all appearances, had surrendered, broke away and started up the harbor, scrambling along as fast as she could go. Decatur in his small boat was not far away. There was a mist of battle smoke hanging over the water, and for an instant he did not notice what was going on; but when he did hear what had happened, all the fierce daring in his nature was aroused, and mingled with the anger and desire for revenge, it completely swept him away. He was told that the Tripolitan commander, who had just made his escape, had treacherously risen upon the prize crew sent on board of him, after he had struck his flag, and with his own hands had killed Decatur's beloved brother James. When this news reached him, Decatur did not falter.

"After him!" he cried to his crew. "Put me alongside of him!"

"We'll put you there, sir," said Reuben James, who was at the tiller. And out of the smoke into the plain view of the guns of the battery and also of the American captives, who had viewed the whole affair from the window of their prison, the little boat started in the wake of the felucca, whose force of men outnumbered hers by three to one. They gained at every jump, and in a few minutes they had run their little boat alongside, thrown down their oars, and to a man had scrambled on board the Tripolitan. Decatur had set his eye upon a red-

turbaned figure that he knew to be the leader. This man had killed his brother! Almost before the bowman had laid hold of the enemy's gunwale, he had made a flying leap off it and gained the deck. Ignoring every risk, scarcely pausing to ward off the many blows that were aimed at him, he made straight for the man in the red turban. The pirate was armed with a long spear and one of those deadly curved scimitars, sharp as steel can stand it, capable of lopping off a limb at a single stroke; drawing back he aimed a full-length thrust as soon as Decatur confronted him, for he must have read his fate in the determined look on the latter's face. Decatur dodged skilfully and tried to come to closer quarters; but the Tripolitan by great agility succeeded in keeping out of the way, and once more he lunged. This time as Decatur parried his sword-blade broke off at the hilt; dropping it, he laid hold of his enemy's spear, and in the wrestle for its possession, he succeeded in tripping up the Turk, and both fell upon the deck. The red-turbaned one, freeing one hand, drew a dagger from his waist-cloth, and just as he was about to plunge it into the body of the young American, Decatur managed to draw a small pistol, and lifting himself on his elbow, blew off the top of his opponent's head.

Revenge was his. But what about our friend Reuben? The only reason that Decatur had not

been killed in the early part of the struggle by the many blows that were aimed at him — for the American boarding party numbered but twelve all told — was the fact that seaman Reuben James was close behind him, warding off blow after blow. Disdaining to protect himself, his right arm was rendered useless, so that he had to shift his cutlass to his left hand. He was slashed seven times about the body. A cut on the shoulder made him drop his weapon, and just at this moment he saw that Decatur was lying upon the deck with his foeman over him. Behind him a sinewy man was aiming a deadly blow directly downward. Reuben James sprang forward. His right arm was useless and his left almost so. There was nothing he could interpose between that deadly blow and his beloved commander but his life! Trying weakly to push back the Tripolitan, he leaned forward swiftly and caught the blow from the scimitar on his own head. It fractured his skull, and he fell insensible to the deck.

But a Yankee sailor is a hard man to kill — in three weeks cockswain James was at his post again. His recovery was no doubt due to his wonderful constitution and his youth.

As soon as the war with Great Britain was declared, Reuben made all haste to join his old commander, and he served in the frigate *United States* when she captured the *Macedonian*, and afterwards



"Reuben James sprang forward."

in the *President* when she took the *Endymion.* In both actions he got as near Decatur as he could, and in the last-named conflict he received three wounds. Although suffering greatly, he refused to leave the deck until after the *President* had struck her flag to the squadron that captured her, whereupon Reuben James was carried below weeping — not from pain or anguish, but from sheer mortification and grief.

At Decatur's funeral he wept again, honest fellow, and whenever he came to port he would visit his commander's grave. Reuben was in actual service until the year 1836, when he arrived in Washington for the purpose of obtaining a pension. He was suffering very much at this time from an old musket-shot wound that had caused a disease of the bone of his leg. It was exceedingly painful and becoming dangerous. After consultation the doctors ordered amputation, and as he lay in the hospital the decision was announced to him. With his old indifference to danger, and his reckless spirit, Reuben replied in the following words: —

"Doctor, you are the captain, sir. Fire away; but I don't think it is shipshape to put me under jury masts when I have just come into harbor."

The day after the operation Reuben was very low, and it was thought that he had but a few hours to live. The old sailor himself declared that he had reached the bitter end of his rope, appeared

resigned to his fate, and begged the surgeon to "ease him off handsomely while he was about it."

"Reuben," said the doctor, "we have concluded that we will give you a good drink and allow you to name it. What will you have, brown stout or brandy toddy?"

"I s'pose I won't take another for a long time, sir," Reuben responded, with a twinkle in his eye. "So just s'pose you give us both; which one first it doesn't much matter."

He prided himself that he had been in ten fights and as many "skrimedges," and as he was a favorite character, he was allowed to celebrate each in turn as they came around, so his happy days were many. There was one subject to which, however, no one could ever refer — Decatur's sad and untimely end. Always in his heart Reuben bore a deep and lasting love, and an ever-living admiration for the man whose life he had saved; and those friends of the young Commodore always treated the old sailor with the greatest of deference. Had Decatur lived, it is safe to state that wherever he went Reuben would have gone also, and if the latter had not walked bare-headed and weeping at his officer's funeral; and had it been the other way about, with Reuben being put to earth, Decatur would have been there, if possible, hat in hand, to shed a tear of sorrow.

THE MEN BEHIND THE TIMES

THE MEN BEHIND THE TIMES

OUT of the north they came in their grimy, bluff-bowed ships — the men behind the times! Three years away from home; three years outside the movement of human government, of family life, ignorant of the news of the world.

The years 1811 and 1812 were remarkable ones in the annals of the whaling industry; vessels that had been cruising for months unrewarded managed to fill their holds, and now, deep laden, they were returning from the whaling grounds, singly or often in companies of a half-score or more. They were ugly vessels, broad and clumsy, with heavy spars and great wooden davits. They stenched of blubber and whale oil, and they oozed in the warm sun as they labored southward, out of the realms of ice and night into the rolling waters of the Pacific. They buffeted the tempestuous weather of the Horn and climbed slowly northward along the coasts of the Western hemisphere.

Sailing together homeward bound for New England in the fall of the year was a fleet of these

Arctic whalers — no matter their exact number or their destinations. For the beginning, let it suffice that the vessel farthest to the west was the good ship *Blazing Star* of New Bedford.

Captain Ezra Steele, her skipper, had made a mental calculation, and he knew exactly the profits that would accrue to him from the sale of the barrels of sperm oil that now filled the deep hold of his ship. It was his custom in fine weather to count these barrels and to go over all these calculations again and again. He was a part owner of the *Blazing Star*, and he had made up his mind exactly what he was going to do with the proceeds of this cruise. He knew that just about this time of the year, his wife and many other wives, and some who hoped to be, would be watching for the sight of welcome sails. The Captain wondered if his daughter Jennie would accept young Amos Jordan's offer of marriage. He and Amos had talked it over. Amos was his first mate now, and the Captain had been thinking of staying at home and sending the young man out in command of the *Blazing Star's* next cruise; but perhaps Jennie, who had a will of her own, had married; or who knows what might have occurred? It is now late October of the year 1812, and a great deal can happen in three years, be it recorded.

Captain Ezra had all the sail that she could carry crowded on the stiff, stubby yards of his

vessel. He was anxious to get home again, but the wind had been baffling for some days, hauling about first one way, then another. Now, however, they were getting well to the north, and the continued mildness of the air showed that probably they had entered the waters of the Gulf Stream. The Captain was dressed in a long-tailed coat and yellow cloth breeches thrust into heavy cowhide boots that had become almost pulpy from constant soaking in the sperm oil. He noiselessly paced the deck, now and then looking over the side to see how she was going.

The old *Blazing Star* creaked ahead with about the same motion and general noise of it that an ox-cart makes when swaying down a hill. From the quarter-deck eight or ten other vessels, every one lumbering along under a press of stained and much-patched canvas, could be seen, and a few were almost within hailing distance. All were deep laden; every one had been successful.

"Waal," said the Captain to himself, "if this wind holds as 'tis, we'll make Bedford light together in abaout three weeks."

The nearest vessel to the *Blazing Star* was the old *Elijah Mason*. She had made so many last voyages, and had been condemned so many times, and then tinkered up and sent out again, that it always was a matter of surprise to the worthy gentlemen who owned her when she came halting along

with her younger sisters at the end of a successful cruise. Her present captain, Samuel Tobin Dewey, who had sailed a letter of marque during the Revolution, was a bosom friend of Captain Steele. Many visits had they exchanged, and many a bottle of rare old Medford rum had they broached together. As Captain Ezra turned the side, he saw that they were lowering a boat from the *Elijah Mason*, and that a thick, short figure was clambering down to it. So he stepped to the skylight, and leaning over, shouted into the cabin.

"Hey, Amos!" he called, "Captain Dewey's comin' over to take dinner with us. Tell that lazy Portugee to make some puddin' and tell him to get some bread scouse ready for the crew. We'll keep 'em here for comp'ny for our lads."

In a few minutes he had welcomed Captain Dewey, who, although almost old enough to remember when his ship had made her maiden voyage, was ruddy and stout in his timbers and keen of voice and eye. But by the time that a man has been three years cooped up in one vessel, his conversational powers are about at their lowest ebb; every one knows all of the other's favorite yarns by heart, and so the greeting was short and the conversation in the cabin of the *Blazing Star* was limited. It was with a feeling of relief that the captains heard the news brought to them by a red-headed, unshaven

boy of seventeen, that there was a strange sail in sight to the northwest. The two skippers came on deck at once. About four miles away they could make out a vessel heaving up and down, her sails flapping and idle. For, a common occurrence at sea, she lay within a streak of calm. Her presence had probably been kept from being known before by the slight mist that hung over the sea to the west and north. The long, easy swells were ruffled by the slight wind that filled the sails of the whaling fleet, and were dimpled to a darker color. But where the stranger lay there was a smooth even path of oily calm. Beyond her some miles the wind was blowing in an opposite direction. She lay between the breezes, not a breath touching her.

"What d'ye make her out to be, Ezra?" asked Captain Dewey, his fingers twitching anxiously in his eagerness to take hold of the glass through which Captain Steele was squinting.

"Man-o'-war, brig," responded the taller man. "Sure's you're born, sir."

"You're jest right," responded Dewey, after he had taken aim with the telescope. "I'll bet her captain's mad, seein' us carryin' this breeze, an' she in the doldrums. We'll pass by her within three mile, I reckon. She may hang on thar all day long an' never git this slant of wind at all. Wonder what she's doin aout here, anyhow?"

In about ten minutes Captain Ezra picked up the glass again. "Hello!" he said. "By Dondy! they've lowered away a boat, an' they are rowin' off as if to meet us. Wonder what's the row?" A tiny speck could be seen with the naked eye, making out from the stretch of quiet water. The crew of the *Blazing Star* had sighted her also, and at the prospect of something unusual to break the monotony, had lined the bulwarks. Suddenly as the boat lifted into the sunlight on the top of a wave, there came a flash and a glint of some bright metal. In a few minutes it showed again. Captain Ezra picked up the glass.

"By gum!" he exclaimed; "that boat's chuck full of men all armed. What in the name of Tophet can it mean?"

"Dunno — I'd keep off a little," suggested Captain Dewey.

The helmsman gave the old creaking wheel a spoke or two in response to the Captain's order.

"She's baound to meet us anyhow," put in the lanky skipper. "What had we better dew?"

"Got any arms on board?" inquired Dewey. "Look suspicshus. Think I's better be gettin' back to my old hooker," he added half to himself.

Amos Jordan, the first mate, was standing close by. "I reckon we've got some few," he said.

"Git 'em aout," ordered the Captain, laconically;

"and, Cap'n Sam, you stay here with us, won't ye?"

Amos started forward. In a few minutes he had produced four old muskets, and a half-dozen rusty cutlasses. But there were deadlier weapons yet on board, of which there were a plenty. Keen-pointed lances, that had done to death many a great whale; and harpoons, with slender shanks and heads sharp as razors. And there were strong arms which knew well how to use them. The Captain went into the cabin and came back with three great, clumsy pistols. One he slipped under his long-tailed coat, and the two others he gave to Captain Dewey and Amos Jordan. There were twenty men in the *Blazing Star's* own crew. The visitors from the old whaler added five more, and with the three mates and the two captains, five more again. In all there were thirty men prepared to receive the mysterious rowboat, and receive her warmly should anything be belligerent in her mission.

"I dunno what they want," said Captain Ezra; "but to my mind it don't look right."

"Jesso, jesso," assented Captain Samuel.

A plan was agreed upon; a very simple one. The men were to keep well hid behind the bulwarks, and if the small boat proved unfriendly, she was to be warned off the side, and if she persisted in trying to board, then they were to give her a

proper reception. The suspense would not be long. The boat was now so close that the number of men in her could be counted distinctly. There were eighteen in all, for the stern sheets were seen to be crowded. The brig at this moment lay in her own little calm, about two miles directly off the starboard beam. The rest of the whaling fleet had noticed her, and had sighted the approach of the armed cutter also. They were edging off to the eastward, evidently hailing one another and huddling close together. But the *Blazing Star*, with just enough wind to move her, held her course.

All was suppressed excitement, for the armed small craft was now within a half a cable's length. "Ship ahoy!" hailed an officer in a short, round jacket, standing up. "Heave to there; I want to board you!"

"Waal," drawled Captain Ezra, through his nose, "I dunno as I shall. What d'ye want?"

There was no reponse to this; the officer merely turned to his crew: "Give way!" he ordered, and in half a dozen strokes the cutter had slid under the *Blazing Star's* quarter. The man in the bow turned and made fast to the main chains with a boat-hook. Captain Steele was smoking an old corncob pipe. He looked to be the most peaceful soul in the world as he stepped to the gangway, but under his long coat-tails his hand grasped the

old horse-pistol. Several heads now showed above the bulwarks. The strange officer, who had evidently not expected to see so many, hesitated. Captain Ezra blew a vicious puff of smoke from between his firm lips.

"Better keep off the side," he said; "we don't want ye on board; who be ye, anyhow?"

"Damn your insolence, I'll show you!" cursed the stranger. "On board here, all you men!" He sprang forward. Captain Ezra did not pull his pistol. He stepped back half a pace and his eye gleamed wickedly. The unknown had almost come on board when he was met full in the chest by the heel of Captain Ezra's cowhide boot. Now the Captain's legs were very long and strong, and aided by the firm grasp he had on both sides of the gangway, the gentleman in the round, brass-buttoned jacket flew through the air over the heads of his crew in the boat below and plumped into the water on the other side. One of the men in the boat instantly drew a pistol and fired straight at the Captain's head — the ball whistled through his old straw hat! But that shot decided matters. It was answered by the four old rusty muskets, the last one hanging fire so long that there was a perceptible time between the flash in the pan, and the report. Two men fell over on the thwarts of the small boat. The man who had fired the pistol sank

back, pierced through and through by the slender shank of a harpoon. But the crowning effect of this attempt to repel boarders occurred just at this minute. A spare anchor, that had been on deck close to the bulwarks, caught the eye of Amos Jordan. "Here, bear a hand!" he cried, and with the help of three others he hove the heavy iron over the bulwarks. It struck full on the cutter's bows, and crushed them as a hammer would an egg-shell. The shock threw most of the occupants from off the thwarts; the boat filled so quickly that in an instant they were struggling in the water — one man gained the deck, but a blow on the head from the butt of Captain Dewey's pistol laid him out senseless. One of the *Mason's* crew hurled a lance at one of the helpless figures in the water. It missed him by a hair's-breath.

"Avast that!" roared Captain Ezra. "We don't want to do more murder!"

The officer who had been projected into the deep by the Captain's well-timed kick had grasped the gunwales of the sunken boat. His face was deathly white; thirteen of his crew had managed to save themselves by laying hold with him. One of them was roaring lustily for some one to heave a rope to him. To save his life, Captain Ezra could not help grinning.

"Waal," he said, "this is a pretty howdy do.

Ye kin come on board naow, if ye want tew, only leave them arms whar they be." As if in obedience to this order, a sailor in a blue jacket with a white stripe down each arm and trimming the collar, unbuckled his heavy belt with his free hand and cast his cutlass far from him. Two others followed suit.

"Naow," said Captain Ezra, "one at a time come on board, an' we'll find aout what ye mean by attackin' a peaceable whaler with dangerous weapons, who's homeward baound an' hain't offended ye."

The first man up the side was a red-cheeked, black-whiskered individual, who mumbled, as he sheepishly gazed about him: "Douse my glims but this is a bloody rum go."

"Tie 'im up," ordered Captain Ezra. The man submitted to having his hands made fast behind his back.

"Now for the next one," said Captain Ezra, blowing a calm puff of smoke up in the air, and watching it float away into the hollow of the mainsail. In turn the thirteen discomfited sailors were ranged along the bulwarks, and no one was left but the white-faced officer, clinging to the wreckage of the boat that was now towing alongside, for one of the crew had heaved a blubber-hook into her, at the end of a bit of ratline.

"Spunky feller, ain't he?" suggested Captain

Ezra, turning to Captain Dewey, who, in the excitement had taken two big chews of tobacco, one after another, and was working both sides of his jaws at once. "The last t' leave his sinkin' ship. That's well an' proper."

The young man — for he was scarcely more than thirty — needed some assistance up the side, for Captain Ezra's boot-heel had come nigh to staving in his chest.

"Naow, foller me, young man," Captain Ezra continued, walking toward the quarter-deck. He ascended the ladder to the poop, and the dripping figure, a little weak in the knees, guarded by a boat-steerer armed with a harpoon, obeyed and followed. As the Captain turned to meet him he noticed that the man in uniform still had his side-arms.

"I'll trouble you for that thar fancy blubber-knife, young man," he said, "an' then I'll talk t' ye." The officer detached his sword from his belt and handed it over. He had not offered yet to say a word.

"Naow," said Captain Ezra, holding the sword behind his back, "who be ye, an' what d' yer want? as I observed before."

"I'm Lieutenant Levison of His Majesty's brig *Badger*."

"Waal, ye ought to be ashamed of yourself," broke in Captain Ezra.



" ' What d'ye mean by attackin' a peaceful whaler ? ' "

"I am," responded the young man. "You may believe that, truly."

"Waal, what d'ye mean by attackin' a peaceful whaler?"

"Why, don't you know?" replied the officer, with an expression of astonishment.

"Know what?"

"That there's a war between England and America?"

"Dew tell!" ejaculated Captain Steele, huskily, almost dropping his pipe. He stepped forward to the break of the poop.

"Captain Dewey," he shouted, "this here feller says thar's a war."

"So these folks have been tellin'," answered the Captain of the *Elijah Mason;* "but I don't believe it. They're pirates; that's what they be."

"Gosh, I guess that's so," said Captain Ezra. "I reckon you're pirates," turning to the officer. "I hain't heard tell of no war."

"We are not pirates," hotly returned the young man. "Damn your insolence, I'm an officer of His Britannic Majesty, King George!"

"Tush, tush! no swearin' aboard this ship. What was you goin' to do, rowin' off to us?"

The officer remained silent, fuming in his anger. "I was going to make a prize of you; and if I had you on board ship, I'd—"

"Belay that!" ordered Captain Ezra, calmly. "Ye didn't make a prize of me, an' you're aboard my ship. Don't forgit it."

"Well," broke in the young man, angrily, "what are you going to do with me?" Captain Dewey had by this time come up on the quarter-deck, followed by the mates.

"I presume likely," said the skipper of the *Blazing Star*, rather thoughtfully, "I presume likely we'll hang ye."

The Englishman — for all doubts as to his nationality were set at rest by his appearance and manner of speech — drew back a step. His face, that had grown red in his anger, turned white again, and he gave a glance over his shoulder. The brig, hopelessly becalmed, lay way off against the horizon.

As he looked, a puff of smoke broke from her bows. It was the signal for recall. He winced, and his eye followed the glance of the stalwart figure with the harpoon that stood behind him.

"For God's sake, don't do that!" he said hastily. "I tell you, sir, that there is a war. There has been war for almost four months now. Upon my word of honor."

The two captains exchanged looks of incredulity. Suddenly the prisoner's face lit up. "I can prove it to you," he said excitedly. "Here is a Yankee

newspaper we took from a schooner we captured off the Capes five days ago."

"*The New Bedford Chronicle*, by gosh!" exclaimed Captain Ezra, in astonishment, taking the soaked brown package. He spread it out on the rail.

"It's true, Cap'n Sammy, it's true," he continued excitedly. "Thar's a war; listen to this," and he read in his halting, sailor manner, the startling headlines: "The Frigate *Constitution* Captures the British Frigate *Guerrière*. Hurrah for Hull and his Gallant Seamen! Again the Eagle Screams with Victory."

There was much more to it, and Captain Ezra read every word. "Young man," he said at last, "I owe ye an apology. If ye'll come daown into our cabin, I kin mix ye a toddy of fine old Medford rum. Between lawful an' honest enemies there should be no hard feelin's, when the fate of war delivers one into the hands of 'tother. Cap'n Sammy," he observed as he reached the cabin, "if we had really knowed thar was a war, we'd a gone back and took that thar brig."

"Yaas," returned Captain Dewey, "we be summat behind the times."

His eyes twinkled as he glanced out of the cabin window. Still becalmed and almost hull down, H. M. S. *Badger* was but a speck against the horizon.

The Englishman drew a long deep breath.

"Come, sir," spoke up Captain Ezra. "Don't get down hearted. 'Live an learn,' that's my motto. We're drinkin' your good health, sir, join right in."

When the *Blazing Star* arrived in port, she turned over to the United States authorities an officer and twelve men, prisoners of war.

THE COWARD

THE COWARD

HE said that he had been impressed into the English service from the brig *Susan Butler*, of New York. But what grounds the boarding officer had taken in supposing him to be a British subject would puzzle most. The cocked-hats generally left a merchant vessel's side with the pick of the unfortunate crew. The qualifications necessary for a peaceable Yankee merchant sailor to change his vocation and become a servant of King George were plain and simple in 1810: ruddy cheeks — crisp curling hair — youth, health, and strength, why! of English birth and parentage most certainly! What use the papers stating that his name was Esek Cobb, or Hezekiah Brown? His home port or natal town Portsmouth, N. H., Bath, Me., or Baltimore? He spoke the mother tongue; he was an A. B. His services were needed to fight old England's enemies, and away he would go in the stern sheets of the press boat, bitter curses on his lips and irons on his wrists.

But this straight-haired, Indian-featured, narrow-

shouldered half-man who stood there on the *Constitution's* deck, with his soaked, scanty clothes, clinging to his thin, big-jointed limbs, why in the name of the Lion or the Unicorn, or the Saint or the Dragon, for that matter, had they chosen him? He told his tale in a low, whimpering voice, with his eyes shifting from one deck-seam to another — Five years in the Royal British Navy! — Five years of glorious service of the one who rules the common heritage of all the peopled earth — Five years of spirit-murdering slavery.

Not six cable-lengths away, a dark shape against the lights of the town, lay the great ship from whose side he had lowered himself in the darkness to swim to the shelter of the smart, tall-sparred frigate, over whose taffrail he had watched his country's flag swinging in the sunlight, tempting him all the day. He had fought against the swiftly running tide until at last — just as his strength had left him — he had been hauled on board by the anchor watch, and now his one prayer was that they would not give him up. The men who stood about looked pityingly at his shivering figure. A middy, attracted by the commotion, had hastened aft to find the officer of the deck. The forecastle people murmured among themselves.

"Captain Hull won't give you up, lad," said one, laying his hand on the poor fellow's shoulder.

"This ship is not the *Chesapeake*," said another; "don't ye fear, man."

"Here's the Leftenant," put in another — "'tention!"

"What's going on here?" asked a low voice.

The sailor who had last spoken touched his cap.

"I was down making the running-boat fast to the boom, sir, when I hears a faint cry, and I sees a man in the water just alongside, sir. I lays hold of him, and thinkin' it's one of our crew, sir, we gets him quietly at the forechains; then we sees as how he ain't one of us, sir, — he says."

"That'll do; let him speak for himself. Where did you come from, my man?"

"From the *Poictiers*, yonder, sir. For the sake of mercy don't give me up!"

"Are you an American?"

"Yes, sir; God's truth, I am."

"Your name?"

"McGovern, sir."

"Where were you born, McGovern?"

The stern, matter-of-fact inquiry could scarce conceal the pity in the tone; but it was the officer-voice speaking.

"In Water Street, New York, sir, not far from the big church — Oh, for the love of —"

"You speak like an Irishman."

"My parents were Irish, your honor, but I was

born in the little house fourth from the corner. You won't let them — Oh, God help me!"

The sturdy rocking beat of oars near to hand off the port quarter caused an interruption. The fugitive gave a quick glance full of terror in the direction of the sound; then he dropped forward upon his knees; his whimpering changed to a hoarse weeping whisper.

"Don't give me up; I'd rather die — save me — save me," he croaked.

One of the watch came hurrying aft. "There's a cutter here at the gangway," he said in a low voice, saluting the Lieutenant.

"Very good, my lad," responded the latter. "Take this man below, give him dry clothes and a place to sleep."

Two men helped the abject creature to his feet and led him sobbing to the forward hatchway. The Lieutenant stepped to the side.

"On board the cutter there," he called, "what do you want at this hour of night?" Well he knew, and he spoke as if the answer had been given.

"On board the frigate," was the reply. "We're looking for a deserter; he started to swim off to you; has he reached here?"

The Lieutenant disdained deception. "We fished a half drowning man out of the water a few minutes since," he replied quietly, leaning over the gangway railing.

"He's a deserter from my ship; I'll be obliged if you will hand him over. — This is Lieutenant Colson, of the *Poictiers*."

"Sorry not to grant Lieutenant Colson's request; the man claims protection as an American. Captain Hull will have to look into the matter. — This is Lieutenant Morris, of the *Constitution*."

"I should like to see Captain Hull at once. In bow there, make fast to the gangway."

"Hold hard, sir. The Captain is asleep; I cannot waken him."

"I demand you do — you are in one of His Majesty's ports."

"I know that well enough — keep off the side, sir." There was a moment's silence, and then the same level tone was heard addressing some one on the deck. "Call the guard; let no one come on board the ship to-night."

There was the sound of some movement on the *Constitution's* deck; the fast ebb tide clopped and gurgled about the vessel's counter mirthfully. The Englishman, standing erect in the stern sheets of the little cutter bobbing against the frigate's side, hesitated.

"On board the frigate, there!"

"Well, sir, in the cutter!"

"Heark'ee! You'll repent this rashness, I can warrant you that, my friend; you will pay high for

your damned Yankee insolence, mark my words. Shove off there forward" (this to the bowman) — "shove off there, you clumsy fool! Let fall!"

There had been no reply from the bulwarks to the Englishman's burst of temper; but Lieutenant Morris stood there drumming with his fingers on the hilt of his sword, and looking out into the darkness. Then an odd smile that was near to being scornful crossed his face, and he turned quietly and began the slow swinging pace up and down the quarter-deck. That Captain Hull would sanction and approve his conduct, he did not have the least suspicion of a doubt; if not on general principles, on account of a certain specific reason — to be told in a few short words: —

It had happened that three days previous to the very evening, a steward, who had been accused of robbing the ward-room mess of liquor, and incidentally of drunkenness arising from the theft, was up for punishment — somehow he had managed to take French leave by jumping out of a lower port. He had been picked up by the running-boat of the flagship. At once he had claimed to be a subject of King George, and, needless to record, the statement was accepted without question — whether he was or not bore little weight, and cuts no figure in this tale. Suffice it: Captain Hull's polite request for the man's return was laughed at, very openly laughed

at, and the Admiral's reply was a thinly veneered sneer — why, the very idea of such a thing!

Now here was a chance for that soul-satisfying game of turn and turn about. Lieutenant Morris, as he paced the broad quarter-deck, felt sure he had voiced Captain Hull's feelings, and then he began a little mental calculation, and as he did so, slightly quickened his stride, and came a few paces further forward until he was opposite the port gangway. There he stopped and looked out at the swinging anchor lights. Six hundred odd guns against forty-four! And then there were the land batteries and the channel squadron probably outside. But actually, what mattered the odds? On the morrow there was going to be something to talk about, that was fact, and Lieutenant Morris smiled as brave men do when they look forward to contest, and know they have right with them. The poor, whimpering dog who had claimed protection was probably not worth his salt, and was certainly not needed; but rather than give him up, Isaac Hull would go to the bottom (in his very best, brand-new uniform, Morris knew that well enough), and with him would go four hundred sturdy lads by the right of their own manly choice.

"And egad they'd have company," Morris reasoned out loud, with that strange smile of his.

Captain Hull heard the news and all about it at

breakfast, and the only sign that it interested him in the least was the fact that he rubbed his heavy legs in their silk stockings (he generally wore silk in port) contentedly together beneath the table, and disguised a wide smile with a large piece of toast.

"Have the man given a number and assigned to a watch, Mr. Morris," was his only comment to the Lieutenant's story.

That was simple enough. But the heavy, red-faced Commodore, although prone to extravagant indulgence in expansive shirt frills, jewelry, and gold lace, usually went at matters in the simplest manner and after the most direct fashion. There did not appear to be any question on this present occasion; he to all appearances dismissed the subject from his mind; but Morris knew better — "Wait," said he to himself, "and we will see what we will see." And although this is the tritest remark in the world, it was more or less fitting, as will be shortly proved.

At nine o'clock a letter arrived from the English Admiral. It was couched in the usual form, it was full of "best compliments," and bristled with references to "courtesy and distinguished conduct in the past," and it was signed "Obd't servant." But it said and meant plainly enough: "Just take our advice and hand this fellow over, Captain Hull, — right away please, no delay; don't stop for anything. He

deserves to be abolished for presuming that he has a country that will protect him."

The word had flown about the decks that the English cutter was alongside with a message from the flagship. The crew had all tumbled up from below, and a hum of voices arose from the forecastle.

"Bill Roberts, here, he was on watch when they hauled 'im on board, warent ye, Bill? — I seed him when they brought 'im below — he had the shakes bad, didn't he, Bill?" The speaker was a short, thickset man, who had a way of turning his head quickly from side to side as he spoke. His long, well-wrapped queue that hung down his back would whip across from one shoulder to the other.

"We thought it was one of yesterday's liberty party trying to get back to the ship," responded the man addressed as Bill. "But when we got him on deck we seed as how he warent one of us, as I told the First Luf. Did you see his back, Tom, when we peeled his shirt off?"

"God a' mercy! I seed it."

Well those marks were known. Deep red scars, crisscrossed with heavy, unhealed, blue-rimmed cuts, feverish and noisome.

"He was whipped through the fleet ten days ago. So he says. I don't know what for, exactly; says he found a midshipman's handkerchief on deck, and

not knowin' whose 'was, put it into his ditty box — some such yarn. — Jack here, he tells of somethin' like that, when he was impressed out of the *Ariadne* into the old *Southampton*, don't ye, Jack?"

"Yes, but damn the yarn — this fellow — where is he now?" asked a tall, light-haired foretopman, around whose muscular throat was tattooed a chain and locket, the latter with a very red-cheeked and exceedingly blue-eyed young person smiling out through the opening in his shirt.

"He's hidin' somewhere down in the hold, I reckon," answered a little, nervous man; "nobody could find him this morning; guess he's had all the spunk licked out of him."

"I've heard tell of that before," remarked the tall foretopman. "His spirit's broke."

Just at this moment the English Lieutenant who had borne the message from the Admiral hurried up from the cabin where he had been in consultation with Captain Hull. His face was very red, and he gave a hasty glance at the crowded forecastle, as if trying to enumerate the men and their quality. Then he hastened down the side, and when he had rowed off some dozen strokes he gave the order to cease rowing. Then standing up he looked back at the frigate he had left, taking in all her points, the number of her guns, and marking her heavy scantling with a critic's eye. Then he

seated himself again, and pulled away for the flagship.

His departure had been watched by four hundred pairs of eyes, and this last act of his had not been passed by unnoticed.

"Takin' our measure," observed Bill Roberts, cockswain of the Captain's gig, turning to Tom Grattan, the thickset, black-headed captain of the maintop. The latter grinned up at him.

"There'll be the Divil among the tailors," he said.

The tall foretopman, who was standing near by, folded his heavy arms across his chest.

"We'll have some lively tumbling here in about a minute, take my word for that, mates," he chuckled, "or my name's not Jack Lange"; and as he spoke, Captain Hull, followed by all of his lieutenants, came up on deck. The Captain turned and spoke a few words to Mr. Cunningham, the ship's master. The latter, followed by three or four midshipmen, hurried forward. Some of the men advanced to meet him.

"All of you to your stations," he ordered quietly. "Gunners, prepare to cast loose and provide port and starboard main-deck guns. The rest stand by ready to make sail if we get a wind off shore."

He gave the orders for the capstan bars to be fitted, and turning to the ship armorer he told him to provide cutlasses and small-arms for the crew.

Quietly boarding-nettings were made ready to be spread, the magazines were opened, even buckets of sand were brought and placed about; sand to be used in case the decks became too slippery from the blood. Down in the cockpit the doctor had laid out his knives and saws on the table. In five minutes the *Constitution* had been prepared for action. And all this had been accomplished without a sound, without a shouted order or the shrilling of a pipe!

Captain Hull inspected ship. Silent, deep-breathing men watched him as he passed along. At every division he stopped and said a few words. "Lads, we are not going to give this man up upon demand. Remember the *Chesapeake*. We are going to defend ourselves if necessary, and be ready for it." He made the same speech in about the same words at least half a dozen times. Then he went into his cabin and donned his best new uniform, with a shining pair of bullion epaulets. This done, he gave a touch to his shirt frills before the glass and went on deck.

Signals were flying in the British fleet, and now the forts were displaying little lines of striped bunting. There was scarce breeze enough to toss them in the air. The sleepy old town of Portsmouth looked out upon the harbor. Soon it might be watching a sight that it never would forget. Per-

haps history would be made here in the next few minutes, and all this time the fugitive lay cowering among the water-butts in the mid-hold.

A breeze sprang up by noon, and the two nearest vessels of the fleet, a thirty-eight-gun frigate, and a razee of fifty, slipped their moorings and came down before it. A hum of excitement ran through the Yankee ship. There was not sufficient wind to move her through the water; but the capstan was set agoing, and slowly she moved up to her anchor. As the smaller English vessel drifted down, it was seen that her men were at quarters. It was the same with the razee. But without a hail they dropped their anchors, one on each side of the *Constitution's* bows, at about the distance of a cable's length. There they waited, in grim silence. The men made faces at one another, and grimaced and gestured through the open ports. The officers, gathered in groups aft, paid no attention to their neighbors.

There followed more signalling. A twelve-oared barge left the flagship for the admiralty pier. From the direction of the town came the sounds of a bugle and the steady thrumming of drums. A long red line trailed by one of the street corners. Already crowds began to gather on the housetops and the water-front. Some clouds formed in the west that looked as if a breeze might be forthcoming. Hull watched the sky anxiously.

The midday meal was served with the men still at their posts. There was no movement made on either side. Toward evening the wind came. No sooner had it ruffled the surface of the water than the *Constitution*, whose cable had been up and down all the day, lifted her anchor from the bottom, and with her main topsail against the mast, she backed away from her close proximity to her neighbors. Then, turning on her heel, she pointed her bow for the harbor mouth. It was necessary for her to sail past every vessel in the fleet. Drums rolled as she approached. Men could be seen scurrying to and fro, and as she passed by the flagship, a brand-new seventy-four, her three tiers of guns frowned evilly down, and a half-port dropped with a clatter. A sigh of relief went up as the *Constitution* passed by unchallenged.

There were but three vessels now to pass, — a sloop of war, a large brig, and a forty-four-gun frigate that lay well to the mouth of the harbor. The latter, apparently in obedience to signals, was getting in her anchor and preparing to get under way; but before the *Constitution* had reached her the breeze died down, and before twilight was over it was dead calm. Hull dropped his anchor, and close beside him, the Englishman dropped his. He was at least two minutes longer taking in his topsails. It continued calm throughout the early

watches of the night. At three o'clock in the morning there was a sound of many oars. The officers were on the alert. "They are coming down to attack us in small boats," suggested one of the junior lieutenants. But soon it was perceived that such was not the intention, for in the dim light the big brig could be seen approaching, towed by a dozen boat's crews working at the oars. There was no reason for longer maintaining any secrecy, and Hull called his crew to quarters in the usual fashion. The sounds might have been heard on shore; but the brig, when she had once reached a berth on the American's quarter, dropped her anchor quietly.

With the gray of morning came a new wind from the westward, and with it the *Constitution* slipped out of port, the two vessels that had menaced her all night long not making a movement to prevent her going. Once well out in the channel, the feeling of suspense was succeeded by one of relief and joy. The fugitive, soaked with bilge water, shivering and hungry, emerged from his hiding-place as he felt the movement of the vessel's sailing.

"How is that man McGovern doing?" asked Captain Hull of Lieutenant Morris, who was dining with him in the cabin. "He ought to be of some use after the trouble and worry he has caused us."

"I'm sorry to say he isn't," responded Morris,

shrugging his shoulders. "He isn't worth powder. Why, even the forecastle boys cuff him about and bully him! He not only lacks spirit, but he is one of those men, I think, who are somehow born cowards. But he has been a sailor at some time or other, I take it, although he told me that he was only cook's helper in the galley on board the *Poictiers*. That's his billet now on board of us, by the way."

It was true: McGovern not only bore the name of a coward, but he looked it, every inch of him. His shifty eyes would lift up for an instant, and then slide away. His elbow was always raised as if to ward off a blow. He acted as if he expected to have things thrown at him. He invited ill treatment by his every look, and he received many blows, and many things were thrown at him. And the unthinking made fun of all this, and used him for their dirty work, and he did not resent it. He took orders from the powder-monkeys, and cringed to the steerage steward. As to the officers and midshipmen, he trembled when they approached him, and after they had passed he would spring forward and hide somewhere, panting, as if he had escaped some danger. The sight of the boatswain deprived him of the power of speech. He acted like a cur that had been whipped, and in fact he lived a dog's life. And yet for this man, those who despised him would have gone to the bottom. Aye, and

cheerfully, for behind him lay the question soon to be cause enough for the shedding of much blood.

When the *Constitution* reached New York, McGovern disappeared.

It was early in the month of June, 1812. There was evidence of a feeling of great uneasiness that prevailed throughout the length and breadth of the country. In the coffee-houses and taverns, at the corners of the streets, in the gatherings in drawing-room or kitchen, there was but one subject talked about—the approaching war with England. It was inevitable, naught could prevent it, was the opinion of some; while others, more cautious, saw nothing in the approaching strife but the dimming of the American star of commerce which had arisen, and death to progress in arts and manufactures. Their flag would be swept from off the sea; the little navy of a handful of ships would have to be dragged up into the shallows, and there dismantled and perhaps never be set afloat again. Little did they know of the glorious epoch awaiting. The makers of it were the sailormen in whose cause the country was soon to rise.

Jack Lange was hurrying along Front Street; he had been transferred from the *Constitution* to the *Wasp*. It was but a moment before that he had landed. He had the tall water-roll in his gait. He

was very jaunty in appearance, with his clean, white breeches very much belled at the bottom, his short blue jacket and glazed cap, and from the smile on his face one could see that he was very well pleased with himself. The half-fathom of ribbon that hung over his left ear would occasionally trail out behind like a homing pennant. He was bound for Brownjohn's wharf, where he knew he might fall in with some of his old messmates and gather up the news. As he luffed sharp about a corner he passed some one hurrying in the opposite direction. It was a man of about thirty years of age. His arms were held stiff at his side, and his face was twitching nervously. His eyes were rolling in excitement. Jack Lange turned, and lifting one hand to the side of his mouth, he shouted: "Ship ahoy, there!" The other man whirled quickly, and the two stood looking at one another for an instant before either spoke. Then the big sailor advanced.

"What's the hurry, messmate?" he said. "This is McGovern, isn't it? Don't you remember me?"

"Sure I remember you," returned the other in a voice with a touch of a rich brogue. "Have you heard the news?" he added suddenly, his hand trembling as he touched Lange on the arm.

"What is it — about war?" asked Jack, eagerly.

"Aye, the war, d'ye mind that? There'll be great doings before long!"

"I suppose they'll lay the navy up in ordinary, and we poor fellows will join the sorefoots with a musket over our shoulders."

"Not a bit of it; they're going to outfit and sail to meet 'em," responded McGovern. "I'm off to tell my folks."

The news was all about the town. People were running hither and thither, clapping on their hats, women called to one another from the windows of the houses, crowds commenced to gather. Suddenly Jack hesitated. Surely it was a cheer, a rousing, sailors' cheer, off to the left down the alley! He listened again, and giving a hitch to his breeches, he started in a lumbering, clumsy gait, swinging his cap about his head. "Hurray!" he bellowed at top lung as he saw in a crowd gathered before one of the little taverns the uniforms of some of the *Constitution's* men, and recognized also Bill Roberts, and his old messmate Grattan.

When the *Wasp* sailed again, she carried between her decks as fine a crew as ever hauled a rope or manned a yard. Some of the men who had served on board the *Constitution* now swung their hammocks in the crowded forecastle of the little sloop.

Grattan and Roberts were in the same watch, the port, which was in charge of young Lieutenant James Biddle. Jack Lange was in the other watch,

and with him were two of the *Constitution's* men, — the little, black-eyed gunner, and a heavy, thickset man, who at first glance appeared to be too fat and clumsy ever to be a topman; yet he was, and one of the best.

Lange was stowing away his hammock but a few hours after the *Wasp* had gotten under way, when the short, thickset man approached him.

"D'ye see who is on board with us?" he asked. He pointed forward.

There, sitting with his back against the bulwarks was the Coward, his eyes staring straight before him, and his fingers and toes — for he was barefooted — working nervously. Soon there came an order to shorten sail. There was a scramble to the shrouds, and among the first to reach them was McGovern. Close beside him was the fat topman.

"Out of the way, you swab!" he cursed, striking out with his elbow. "This is man's work," he added. "Out of the way, can't you!"

The hot blood rushed to McGovern's face. He hesitated. At that moment some one pushed him from behind, and before he knew it he had been hustled off the bulwarks to the deck. Without a glance behind him he slunk down the hatchway. And so he went back to rinsing the dishes in the galley.

Inside of three months the *Wasp* was back in

port again. Once more McGovern disappeared. No one missed him, and no one thought about it.

On the 13th of October Captain Jacob Jones set sail again in his trim vessel, but just before the *Wasp* had left her moorings a boat rowed with quick, nervous strokes put out from shore. The man at the oars was doing his best to catch the sloop of war before she should gain headway. In the stern sheets sat an old woman. Now and then she would encourage the man pulling at the oars. There was a short, choppy sea, and both figures in the little boat were soaked with spray.

Suddenly the topsails filled, the headsails blew out with a vicious snap, and just as the sloop lurched forward, the little boat was abreast the forechains. The man dropped the oars, and, springing outboard, managed to catch the lower shroud; with agility he hauled himself up arm's length and sprawled over the bulwarks, down on deck. It was McGovern, and his strange coming on board had been observed by many. He arose quickly and gaining the shrouds once more, he waved his hand. "Good-by, mither!" he cried, and then he turned back to greet a burst of laughter. But all hands were too busy with the getting under way to pay much attention to him, and he disappeared below.

The next morning it blew a heavy gale, and for

four days the wind lasted, and even after the danger had passed the day broke with a heavy swell on the sea and the weather yet boisterous. The *Wasp's* previous cruise had been uneventful. She had failed to fall in with the enemy, and now this continued stress of weather made the sailors, ever prone to find reasons in their superstitions, to think that they must have aboard with them a Jonah; some one who brought ill luck, and why they should have settled upon poor McGovern it would be hard to tell. Perhaps he was ignorant of the reason for the new meaning of the looks of dislike and suspicion that were cast at him, or perhaps he failed to notice them. At any rate he made no comment.

Surely it was not his fault if the second day out, during the height of the storm, the jibboom had carried away, and two of the starboard watch went with it and were lost.

There was a great deal of excitement attending this particular daybreak, the morning of the 18th, for the night before, after the clouds had cleared away and the stars had shone brightly forth, several large sails had been reported to the eastward. Captain Jones had laid his course to get to windward of them, so as to have the weather-gage when day came. The vessels had disappeared as the weather had thickened a little, and now all hands had gathered on deck, and the sloop was romping along

through the slight drizzle, almost dipping her yard arms at times in the heavy seas that raced past.

"There they are.—Sails off the lee bow, two points away!" shouted a lookout from the forecastle. It had cleared a trifle, and there they were, sure enough, seven vessels, and nearer to, was a trim man-of-war brig. She was edging up slowly, taking in sail as she did so, and the *Wasp* swung off to meet her.

"English, begad!" exclaimed Captain Jones. "Have the drummer beat to quarters, Mr. Biddle, as soon as you get down the topgallant yard and shorten sail."

"Very good, sir.—Hello, she shows the Spanish flag."

"Never mind that; she's English, I'll bet a thousand."

Biddle bawled out the orders, and the usual helter-skelter rush, from which emerges such careful work and such wonderful precision, followed. But the first man to gain the weather shrouds this time was McGovern. Since the news that the enemy had been sighted had been passed below, he had been very much in evidence. Instead of his greasy scullion's rags, he wore a clean suit of canvas. His white shirt was trimmed with blue silk, and his long hair, that usually straggled down his cheeks, was twisted into a neat queue down his back. He paid no attention to the questions addressed to him, took

no heed of the merriment (for men will jest on strange occasions); but kept his eyes shifting from the group of officers on the quarter-deck, to the on-coming vessel that was plunging heavily in the great seas. When he had seen the Spanish flag, his face had fallen; but Bill Roberts was standing close beside him.

"Never mind that, my lads!" he roared to those about him. "No one but a John Bull or a Yankee would bring his ship along like that; take my word for it, my hearties!" and then had come the order to shorten sail.

McGovern was across the deck like a shot, at least three feet in advance of the next man, who, as luck would have it, was the short, fat topman before referred to. Whatever he may have thought was McGovern's proper sphere and natural instincts, it required but a glance to show that he knew what he was about as he started clearing away the parel lashings and then unreeving the running-gear. It requires but two men at the masthead to make fast the downhauls and look out for the lifts, and on this occasion there were two pairs of skilful hands at work. The older seamen looked into McGovern's face wonderingly; but the latter was going silently about his work, occasionally looking out across the rolling white of the sea at the little brig that would soon be within gunshot. He could plainly make

out the red coats of the marines grouped along the rail. "Sway away!" and the topgallant yards came safely down to the deck. The men were at quarters now, and the matches were lighted.

"Well done, McGovern!" exclaimed the fat sailor, with a shamefaced smile. "Well done, McGovern!" called one of the midshipmen, grasping him by the arm. "Here, take No. 2 at this twelve-pounder. Do you know the orders, lad?"

"Yes, sir, yes," answered the Coward, excitedly. "I was captain of a gun once, o' truth I was."

But a pistol shot's distance now separated the two vessels. Captain Jones hailed through his trumpet. Down came the Spanish flag, and there was the red cross of England! The brig let go a broadside; but just before she did so, the sound of a cheer had come down on the wind.

There is no time to describe the details of the action. But few of the *Wasp's* crew had been in actual combat before. Soon there were deep red spots on the deck; there were groans and curses, and much sulphur smoke. Occasionally the muzzles of the guns would dip deep into the water as the *Wasp* hove down into the hollow of the surge. A sharp crack aloft, and down came the main topmast, and with it fell the topsail yard. It tangled in the braces, and rendered the headsails useless. The Englishman was playing havoc with the rigging,

braces, and running-gear of the *Wasp*. Grape and round shot were mangling everything aloft.

There had been a few men in the foretop when the action had commenced. One of them was Roberts. Suddenly glancing up from his gun, McGovern saw a sight that made him start and cry out, pointing. There was Bill trying weakly to haul himself over the edge of the top. Blood was running from a wound in his forehead, and his left arm hung useless; his leg was hurt also. But he was still alive and dimly conscious. At a sudden lurch of the vessel, he almost pitched forward down to the deck. Then as McGovern watched him, he appeared to give up hope, and, twisting his hand into the bight of a rope, he lay there without moving. But no man could live there long! Splinters were flying from the masts; blocks were swinging free and dashing to and fro; new holes were being torn every second in the roaring, flapping sails. It may have been that no one else had time to think about it; but McGovern did not hesitate. He threw down the sponge and jumped into the slackened shrouds.

"Come out of that, you fool!" somebody shouted at him from below; but he did not pause. A round shot whizzed by his elbow. A musket-ball carried away a ratline above his head, just as he reached forward. He felt as if a hot flame had licked



"*Carefully* he lowered away."

across his shoulder, and in an instant more his white shirt was white no longer, and was clinging to his back. But it was nothing but a graze, and, undaunted, he kept on ascending. He hauled himself into the top. There lay a dead marine, shot through the temple. Now he bent over the prostrate sailor. Yes, he was alive! Roberts was breathing faintly. Despite the interest and excitement of the action men were watching him from below. But he must work fast if he was to save a life — a bullet at any time might complete the work already begun. He tried to lift the heavy figure on to his shoulders, but found he could not. But good fortune! One of the halliards had been shot away aloft, and hung dangling across the yard. McGovern saw the opportunity. Passing the bitter end of it around Roberts' body, close underneath the arms, he made it fast. Then passing the rest of it through the shrouds he gave first a heave that swung the prostrate figure clear of the blood-stained top, and then carefully he lowered away until at last the body reached the deck.

Somehow the musket-balls had stopped their humming through the upper rigging, and even the firing of the *Wasp* had slackened, as McGovern, reaching for one of the stays, rode down it safely and reached the deck. And now occurred a thing that has been unchronicled, and yet has had its

parallel in many instances of history. A cheer arose, a strong, manly cheer, — it came from across the water; it preceded by an instant the roaring of the hoarse voices close about him. But McGovern's ear had caught it.

"Hark!" he cried, pushing his way forward to reach his station. "Hark, they're cheerin'! They must have thought we've struck. We'll show 'em!" He picked up his sponge again.

Now the firing became incessant. Steadily as the blows of a hammer were delivered the telling shots from the *Wasp's* port divisions. The flames of powder scorched the enemy's bows. All at once there came a crash. The jibboom of the Englishman swept across the deck, tearing away the shrouds and braces, and then with a heave and a lurch the vessels came together, grinding and crunching with a sound of splintering and tearing of timbers as they rolled in the heavy sea.

There was not a man on board the *Wasp* that did not expect to see the English sailors come swarming over the bow of their vessel, and drop down to fight in the old-fashioned way, hand to hand and eye to eye. But there must have been some delay. For an instant there was a silence except for the ripping of the Englishman's bow against the *Wasp's* quarter. But the red-crossed flag was still flying.

Captain Jones saw his opportunity. The enemy

lay in so fair a position to be raked that some of the *Wasp's* guns extended through her bow ports. The men, who, without waiting for orders had caught up cutlasses and boarding-pikes, were ordered back to their stations, and at such close quarters the broadside that followed shattered the enemy's topsides as might an explosion on her 'tween decks. Two guns of the after division, loaded with round and grape, swept her full length.

But some of the more impetuous of the crew had not heard, or perhaps had not heeded the order to return to their stations. Jack Lange had made a great leap of it, and had caught the edge of the Englishman's netting. As an acrobat twists himself to circle his trapeze, he swung himself by sheer strength on to the bowsprit, and gaining his feet, he stood there an instant, then he jumped over the bulwarks on to the enemy's deck and disappeared. The handful of men who had sought to follow his leadership had all failed their object, for a slant of the wind had hove the two vessels so far apart that they were almost clear of the tangle of shrouds and top-hamper that had made them fast. But one man had made a spring of it and had caught the bight of one of the downhauls that was hanging free. Hand over hand he hauled himself up to the nettings, and after considerable difficulty — for he was all but exhausted — he succeeded in getting his body half-way

across the bulwarks, and then with a lurch he disappeared. During all this, not a shot had been fired. Every one had watched with anxiety the strange boarding party of two. What would be the outcome of it? Suddenly, as the sails that had been tearing and flapping, filled, and the noise subsided, a strange sound came down from the direction of the other vessel. It was like a great chorused groan — the mingling of many voices in a note of agony! Then with a crash they met again, the English ship fouling hard and fast in the *Wasp's* mizzen rigging. Lieutenant Biddle, followed by a score of armed boarders, jumped upon the bulwarks and endeavored to reach the other vessel and be the first on board. In this he would have succeeded had not little Midshipman Baker caught his officer's coat-tails and endeavored to emulate his eagerness. But at last the Lieutenant and his followers gained the deck, there to be witness of a wonderful sight.

There was a wounded man limply leaning against the wheel. Three officers were huddled near the traffrail — but one was able to stand upon his feet; the other two were badly wounded. Jack Lange and McGovern the Coward had possession of the ship. But somehow, overcome by the sight, they had not left the forecastle, and it was Lieutenant Biddle's own hand that lowered away the flag.

His Majesty's sloop of war *Frolic* was a prize.

Frightful had been the carnage! But twenty of the English crew were fit for duty. She was a charnel ship. The *Wasp* had lost but five men killed, and but five men wounded. Among the latter was Bill Roberts. Although he was shot three times, the surgeon declared that he would live.

To and fro the boats plied busily. The *Frolic's* masts fell shortly after she had been boarded, and now every effort was made to repair damages and take care of the many wounded and the dying.

Every one talked about McGovern, he who had been the Coward; he who had cringed to the loblolly boys, and who had taken orders from the ward-room steward; who had washed dishes and dodged blows; *he* was the hero of the day. And how did he take all this new glory, the admiring glances and the remarks of his messmates? Not as a vainglorious seeker of reputation, not as a careless daredevil who had risked recklessly his life for the mere excitement; but as a cool-headed, brave-hearted man, who while there was yet work to do found no time to think of what had been done. He was reincarnate, as if during the fire and smoke, when the hand of death was everywhere, the spirit to do, and dare, had been born within him. Forgotten had been the red scars of the disgracing cat that seared his back. Here was his chance to show what was in him; to even

up matters with the power that had almost crushed his soul. Every shot from the *Wasp's* side made his heart beat with joy. The born fighter had been awakened. He craved for more, and animated by this feeling he went about his work with a half-delirious strength that made him accomplish the task of two men. All eyes were on him. His officers had marked him.

"Sail ho!" called down one of the men who was clearing away the wreckage aloft. "Sail ho! off the starboard bow."

Driven by the strong breeze that had blown throughout the morning a great sail was bearing down, looming larger and larger every minute. The *Wasp* cleared for action. The *Frolic*, aided by the little jury masts that had been hastily rigged, was ordered to bear away to the southward before the wind. The *Wasp*, wounded and bedraggled as she was, bore up to meet the oncomer.

Slowly the great shape rose out of the water, sail by sail. A tier of guns! another! and a third!—a seventy-four! With two ridges of white foam playing out from her broad bow, she bowled along and passed so close that her great yard arms almost overshadowed the little wounded sloop. There came the sound of a single gun, and at this imperious order the *Wasp's* flag fluttered to the deck. It had not needed this sight of the red cross curling

and uncurling across the white expanse of new sail to mark her as one of the great guard ships of old England. English she was from truck to keelson, and long before she fired that disdainful shot the gunners of the *Wasp* had put out their smoking matches.

And McGovern had watched her come with an ever-changing expression in his eyes. His face, flushed with excitement and victory, had paled. Once he had started as if to run below and hide. There was something familiar in those towering masts and that gleaming white figurehead, and as she sailed on to retake the little *Frolic*, McGovern was compelled to hold fast to the bitts to prevent himself from falling. The ports were crowded with jeering faces. The quarter-deck rail was lined with laughing officers, in cocked hats and white knee-breeches. Under her stern gallery he read the word *Poictiers!* From that he glanced up at the main yard arm. Men had swung there at the end of a rope — yes, he had once seen a convulsive, struggling figure black against the sky. Men would swing there again! The maxim that 'a deserter has no defence' recurred to him. He glanced about. Close by was a chain-shot, two nine-pound solid shot connected by a foot of heavy links. Like one afraid of being seen, he skulked across the deck as he had skulked in the days before. He reached

the side where part of the bulwarks had been torn away, and crouching there he passed the end of his heavy belt through a link of the chain, and without a sound lurched forward, all huddled up, and struck sideways in the water.

THE SCAPEGOAT



THE SCAPEGOAT

IT was a famous dinner party that Captain William Bainbridge, Commander of the Charlestown Navy Yard, gave on the night of the 31st of May, 1813. In those days gentlemen sat long at a table; they knew good wines when they tasted them, and if they drank a great deal at a sitting, they sipped slowly.

The cloth had been removed, and upon the shining mahogany rested two or three cut-glass decanters filled with the best Madeira. Captain Bainbridge sat at the head of the table, in a high-backed oaken chair; he was dressed in a blue uniform coat, with the gold-braided lapels thrown back over his wide chest. In his snow-white shirt frill there nestled a sparkling jewel given to him by the Sultan of Turkey, upon the occasion when Bainbridge had brought the old frigate *George Washington* into the harbor of Constantinople and there for the first time displayed the flag of the United States.

The candles had burned low in the candelabra, a silence had fallen upon the company; it was evident that something had interrupted the easy flow of wit

and conversation. Captain James Lawrence, the guest of the evening, was in full uniform, with epaulets and great gold buttons as big as half-dollars. He sat opposite Captain Bainbridge, with both elbows on the table, cracking walnuts and eating them as if to stave off hunger; his face was flushed, and a frown was on his brow. A young man of not more than twenty, with a gleaming mass of gold braid on his left shoulder, the mark of the lieutenant, had the next seat to him; he was nervously drumming on the table with his finger-nails. Occasionally he would glance from Lawrence to Bainbridge, and then at the two other officers who were sitting there in constrained silence.

Well did they all know how easy it was for the word to be spoken that would fire the smouldering mine, and change what had been a jovial gathering to the prologue of a tragedy. Men had to be careful how they spoke in those days. There could never be any brawling or careless flying of words; courtesy and gallantry limited their power of personal offence; but epithets or implications once given expression could not easily be withdrawn. Men who had been friends and who had fought for the same cause would, with the stilted hat-tipping and snuff-offering fashion of the time, meet one another in the gray of morning under God's sky and do one another to the death.

At last Lawrence spoke.

"Are you not judging me harshly in this matter, sir?" he said. "You say you doubt my caution." His gaze shifted from the brilliant jewel in Bainbridge's breast to the frank, manly face above.

"Your caution; yes, Captain," was the return; "your courage, my dear sir, never."

Lawrence cracked another walnut with a loud report. "Surely in my little affair with the *Peacock* you have granted that I used judgment; and in regard to the distribution of prize money, which has not seemed to suit our mutual views —"

Bainbridge interrupted him. "That is a question apart from our present discussion, sir," he said. "I pray that you will postpone it. But I can only say for the benefit of all concerned that I do not doubt an easy adjustment. For what you decide must perforce be agreeable to me."

"You are my senior —"

"And for that reason I have taken the opportunity, as you have brought up the subject, to express my opinions. I cannot order you; it is outside my province or my wish. Before the company you have brought up this matter, and for that reason I have discussed it. Every one must agree that the Department authorities at Washington have treated you most unhandsomely. Had you been given the command of the *Constitution*, as was first

intended and promised you, and were she in a condition to put to sea, I should say nothing but what would encourage you to exercise despatch."

"Ah, if I but had the *Constitution* and her crew," put in Lawrence, with a sigh; "if I but had them." Suddenly he brought his strong, clenched fist down upon the table with a crash: "Then this English captain would not be flaunting his flag at the harbor mouth, daring me to come on and fight him; shaming us all here where we lie at anchor! The *Chesapeake* is ready!"

"Ah, but she is the *Chesapeake*," interrupted Bainbridge.

"True enough; but why not give me the chance to wipe the stain from off her name?" He suddenly arose, and leaning across the table spoke quickly and vehemently. "Order two hundred of the *Constitution's* men on board of her, and I will sail out and give battle to-morrow! I doubt not, nor do I fear the consequences. I ask this of you as a proof of friendship."

In his excitement, Lawrence upset one of the tall wine-glasses. It tinkled musically, and, reaching forward, he filled it to the brim, and Bainbridge waited until this had been done.

"I cannot grant your request, Captain Lawrence," he said quietly at last. "Your ship is in no condition to go out and fight at the moment. She has

a green crew. Her running-gear has not been tested."

"Then let me go into the yard and call for volunteers!" Lawrence interrupted hotly.

"I cannot prevent you taking men who are not busily employed; but I shall not order men from work. 'Twould be sanctioning your action."

The mine was on the point of being fired; the fatal word was trembling on Lawrence's lips. The boy lieutenant half rose from his chair; but Lawrence controlled himself with an effort. He may have realized how senseless it would have been to impute to William Bainbridge lack of courage. He may have thought of the wicked consequence of such a speech. But he was obstinate. His nature was not one to be thwarted easily. Throwing back his shoulders and looking around the table, he raised the brimming wine-glass to his lips.

"Then, here's to the success of the *Chesapeake!*" he blurted, and drained it to the bottom. "I shall go out and fight this fellow to-morrow," he added sullenly. "You gentlemen," turning to the others, who were all officers of his luckless ship, "shall share with me the honor." Turning, he walked to the side of the room and picked up his cloak and heavy bullion-edged cocked hat.

"Sir, to you good evening."

Bainbridge was about to speak; but on second

thought he remained silent and bowed slowly. Without a word Lawrence, followed by three of his officers, left the room. The young Lieutenant lingered. His face had flushed when his captain had spoken the word "glory," and yet the calm, dispassionate judgment of Bainbridge had appealed to him. He was a beautiful lad, this officer, with long-lashed eyes like those of a young girl. His light brown hair curled softly over his white forehead. One would expect nothing but laughter and song from those lips, and it needed the strong, square-cut jaw to give the note of decision and character to his face. It redeemed it from being too classical; too beautifully feminine. He loved James Lawrence, his commander, and truly a boy's love for a man who excites his admiration is much like a woman's in its tenderness and devotion. Lawrence had been a father to him, or better, an elder brother, for the *Chesapeake's* commander was but thirty-two years of age.

Young William Cox had been much at Captain Bainbridge's house since the *Chesapeake* had dropped her anchor in the Charles River, and the Commandant had watched with approval the mutual attraction that existed between the young officer and the beautiful Miss Hyleger, who was the sister of Bainbridge's wife. He probably knew what was going through the young man's mind. As he followed after the others Bainbridge stopped him.

"Good night, James; may God watch over you. You will do your duty; of that I am well assured."

"Thank you, sir," the lad returned, flushing as he took Bainbridge's hand in both of his.

When left alone, the Commodore sat there in his great armchair, and on his face was a great shadow of sorrow.

Lawrence did not go on board his ship that night; but Lieutenant Ludlow, Mr. White, the sailing-master, and Lieutenants Cox and Ballard repaired on board at once to make ready for the approaching conflict. All night long James Lawrence walked alone under the trees in the river park, and at early dawn, still dressed in his resplendent uniform, with his silk stockings and white knee-breeches, he made his appearance at the Navy Yard. Some sixty men responded to his call. But the older sailors wagged their heads. It was not necessary. Ah, that was it! Had it been a case of do or die, there was not a man who would not have thrown down his work and jumped at the chance to fight. But the *Chesapeake!* she was an unlucky vessel. Sailors avoided her. Her crew was riffraff in a measure; men not wanted on other ships; many of foreign birth; Portuguese and Spaniards; a few Danes, and without doubt some renegade servants of King George.

As the morning mist cleared away from the water, there in the offing was the English frigate that had been hovering and flaunting her challenging flag for the past three days. . . . Boston was all agog with the news. The whole city had flocked to the water front. Before nine o'clock the *Chesapeake* was surrounded by a flotilla of small craft. Men cheered themselves hoarse. Flags floated from the buildings, and women waved handkerchiefs from the docks. But yet, some of the wise ones wagged their heads.

The bulwarks and top sides of the *Chesapeake* had been freshly painted, and the paint was not yet dry. As her crew stretched out the new yellow hempen running-gear, they smudged everything with the pigment. There was no time to be careful; it was a hurly-burly haste on every hand. The officers were reading the lists of the men at the guns. They did not know them by name or sight, and were trying to impress their faces on their minds at this short notice. There was bawling and hauling and shouting and confusion. How different from the clockwork methods on board the *Constitution!* But at last everything was as ready as it could be. Lawrence, after his sleepless night, pale but nerved to tension by excitement, came from the cabin. As he looked down the deck, his spirits must have sunk. Things were not shipshape — at

this very instant he may have regretted that he had formed the decision to go out and fight. But it was too late to withdraw! He gave the orders, and, to the tune of Yankee Doodle, they began getting in the anchor. The pilot was on board, standing beside the helmsman. Lawrence went back to his cabin and wrote a letter that has only recently been given to the public. It was addressed to James Cox, the uncle of young Lieutenant Cox, of his own ship. The whole tone of the missive displays the despondent attitude of mind under which Lawrence was now laboring. The postscript that he added, after referring to the possibility of his untimely end, reads as follows: —

"10 A.M. The frigate is in plain sight from our decks, and we are now getting under way."

It was the last sentence he ever penned. As soon as he had sealed the letter he came on deck and delivered it to the pilot, who left the ship within half an hour.

Now came the ordeal. The small boats that had surrounded the vessel were being left behind as she gained headway. But some of the faster sailers among them managed to keep pace, and cheer after cheer sounded. A crew of rowers in a whaleboat kept abreast of the *Chesapeake's* bows, shouting words of encouragement to the crew. But the men did not appear eager. The officers could not help

but notice it, and the impression must have been most heart breaking.

"Muster the crew," Lawrence ordered at last, turning to young Ludlow; "I will say a few words to them." The men gathered in the waist, whispering and talking among themselves.

"William," said Lawrence, to Lieutenant Cox, before he began to make the customary address that a ship's captain in those days made before going into action, — "William, I know that I can trust you — you will do your duty." The young man at his side touched his cap. "You will find me here, sir," he replied, "unless my duty is elsewhere." Lawrence stepped a few feet forward.

"Men of the *Chesapeake*," said he, "it is our good fortune to be able to answer the call that our country has made upon our honor. We will answer it with our lives if necessary. Do your duty; fight well and nobly. Your country's eyes are on you, and in her heart she thanks you in advance. Yonder British frigate must return under our lee. Let no shots be wasted. To your stations."

There was some low grumbling off to one side of the deck. A black-visaged, shifty-eyed fellow came pushing to the front. A double allowance of grog had been already served; but many of the men had been imbibing freely, owing to the proximity of the shore and the ease with which liquor could be

obtained. The man strode out before the crowd and stopped within a few paces of the Captain. He spoke in broken English. Lawrence listened in anger and almost in despair. The man complained in insolent tones that he and his messmates had not been paid some prize money due them now a long time. Lawrence's hand sought the hilt of his sword. He would have run the fellow through as he well deserved, did he not see that among the crew he numbered many followers. Their surly looks and gestures proved their evil temper. *The man declared that unless he and thirty of the others were paid at once they would decline to fight.*

Here was mutiny at the outset! A fine state of affairs to exist on board a vessel going to fight a battle. . . . There was nothing for it but to acquiesce. He could not treat the cur as he deserved.

"Take these men to the cabin and pay them what they say is due them," said Lawrence, bitterly. There was not money enough on board the ship, and he was forced to go to the cabin himself, and sign due bills for the amount. And all this time the enemy was in the offing prepared and eager.

The English frigate hauled her wind and put out to sea as she saw the *Chesapeake* approach. Her flag was flying, and now Lawrence unfurled his. At the main and mizzen and at the peak he flew the Stars and Stripes, while at the fore he displayed

the motto flag: "Free trade and sailors' rights." On the two vessels sailed over the bright, sunlit sea. The day was almost without a cloud. One or two small sailing vessels still followed in the *Chesapeake's* wake. At four P.M. she fired a challenging gun.

There were no seamen of the good old school that could not if they had seen the English ship but admire her. With calm precision the *Shannon*—for it was well known who she was—braced back her maintopsails and hove to. In silence the two manœuvred. At every point the English vessel had the better of it. Which would fire first? There was one moment when the *Chesapeake* had the advantage. Owing to her clumsiness more than to her agility, she came about within pistol-shot distance under the enemy's stern. But her commander held his fire. A minute more and they were on even terms, sailing in dead silence beside one another, nearing all the time—who would have thought that they were craving each other's blood? The orders on board one ship could be heard on board the other. The word "Ready" was passed at the same moment; but the discharge of the Englishman's broadside preceded that of the *Chesapeake* by a perceptible moment. How well those guns must have been trained! Every one was double shotted and heavily charged. The *Chesapeake* quiv-

ered from the shock. In that second, in the time it takes a man to catch his breath, the whole aspect of affairs had changed. Mr. White, the sailing-master, was immediately killed; Mr. Ballard, the Fourth Lieutenant, was mortally wounded. Ten sailors fell dead to the decks. Twenty-three were badly hurt. The bulwarks were crushed in, and the cabin was torn to pieces.

"Steady!" roared Lawrence. "Steady, boys, have at them!"

There was a marine with a musket in one of the Englishman's tops. He was aiming at the resplendent figure in gold epaulets, carefully as one aims at a target, and at last he pulled the trigger. Lawrence fell down on one knee; but leaning against the companionway, he pulled himself erect again. Not an expression or exclamation came from him; but his white knee breeches were streaked and stained with red. Nearer yet the two ships drifted. Their crashing broadsides scorched each other. The Englishmen cheered, and the Yankees answered them — the volunteers from the Charlestown yard were giving a good account of themselves. But several times the *Chesapeake* yawed and fell off her course as if she had lost her head, like a man dizzy from a blow that deadens the brain. And good reason why: three men in succession were shot away from her wheel. The expert riflemen placed

in the *Shannon's* mizzentop were doing their work well. A puff of wind took the American all aback, she fell off and swung about. Her anchor caught in the *Shannon's* after port. And now not a gun could be brought to bear! Whole gun's crews left their places and plunged down the companionway to the deck below. But the *Shannon* was taking advantage of her opportunity. Charges of grape and canister raked and swept the decks.

Lawrence looked in despair at the frightful havoc. He knew what now would happen. Every minute he expected to see the English boarders come tumbling on board. Lieutenant Cox had been sent below to take charge of the second division. Lawrence looked for an officer. The only one in sight was Lieutenant Ludlow. Had it not been for his uniform no one would have known him. He was blood and wounds from head to foot. He could not stand erect, and was dragging himself about the deck, one useless leg trailing behind him.

"The bugler! call the bugler!" thundered Lawrence. "To repel boarders on the spar-deck! Where is the after-guard?"

Ludlow fell, better than clambered, down the main-hatch. "Pass the word for the bugler!" he cried. "Boarders away!" But the bugler could not be found. And good reason why. He was down in the deep hold hiding amid the stores.

Young Lieutenant Cox heard the order. "Boarders away!" he shouted. As he started to rally his men and rush up from below, he was met by the crowd fleeing from the terrible slaughter that was taking place above. But at last he managed to work his way up the companion ladder. He too was wounded and bleeding — a splinter had gashed him in the neck and another in the shoulder. What a sight he saw! Lawrence, his beloved friend, his idol, weakly holding fast to one of the belaying-pins, still repeating his fruitless cry for the men to rally on the deck. As Cox leaped toward him a second bullet from the mizzentop struck the captain in the abdomen — Cox caught him as he fell. Lawrence grasped his hand.

"Don't give up the ship!" he cried weakly. "Don't give up the ship!" He placed one arm about the boy's shoulder. He was so young; he loved his leader so much. He was faint from loss of blood. It was his first action. Never before had he seen dying men, or listened to the groans and shrieks of the wounded. Who would expect him to break away from that last fond grasp that had not relaxed? He did not know that he was now commander! Almost carrying his wounded leader, he staggered down the ladder to where the surgeon and his mates were busy at their direful work. He did not see, just as he left the deck, the

English boarders headed by their own Captain, the brave and gallant Broke, spring over the railing. He did not know that he and the wounded Ludlow were the only officers now left to handle ship. . . . As the surgeon hastened to Lawrence's side, Cox knelt down upon one knee. He could not control the tears of sorrow and bitterness. The whole scene of the previous night flashed through his mind. Lawrence, his beloved, eager for glory, now shattered with the hand of death upon him. The Captain released the boy's hand.

"You are a brave lad, William," he said. "But stay here no longer, though I would have you with me."

There was more rushing and shouting from the decks above. Cox hastened up as fast as his weakened limbs would carry him. It was hand to hand now; cutlasses plying, men stabbing on the decks, growling and grovelling in their blood like fighting dogs. There was a party making an onslaught toward the bows. Cox drew his sword and joined them. The first thing he knew, they were slashing at him with their heavy blades. They were Englishmen! He did not know his own crew by sight. The firing had stopped; the summer breeze was blowing the smoke away. But what a sight and what a sound! The battered, reddened hulls, and the groans that rose in chorus! Of the further details there is little to relate. Poor Ludlow was



"'Stay here no longer — though I would have you with me.'"



killed at last by a cutlass in the hands of a British sailor; for after the flag had been hauled down, a second action had been started by a hot-headed boy firing at a British sentry placed at the gangway. The English, by mistake, had hoisted the captured flag uppermost, but it was soon discovered and hauled down again — the fight was over. The *Chesapeake* has been reckoned one of England's dearest prizes.

The sorrowful news of her defeat was carried quickly into Boston. The wise ones wagged their heads again. At the house of the Commandant of the navy yard at Charlestown, Bainbridge paced the room alone, deep lines of grief marking his rugged face, and on the floor above, a young girl lay insensible, for the word as first brought was that with the other officers James Cox had had his death. Captain Broke, the Englishman, had fought a gallant, manly fight, all honor to him! He was badly wounded, and, like poor Lawrence, it was thought that he would die. The latter, when he had heard the firing cease, had said to the surgeon: —

"Run to the deck. Tell them not to strike the colors! While I live they shall wave!" Brave Lawrence! They were the last words he ever spoke. Although he lingered four long suffering days, not a sound passed his lips. Broke, on the contrary, was raving in a delirium, and these were

the words he kept repeating — words he must have spoken before the action had begun: —

"See the brave fellow! How grandly he brings his ship along! How gallantly he comes to action!"

Ah, how Halifax rejoiced when the *Shannon* sailed in there with a Yankee frigate under her lee. How the guns boomed, and how the city went mad with joy! And how England rejoiced, and the "Thunderer" thundered and the king clapped his hands! And how much they made of it! How proudly they preserved every relic of the captured ship! How they cherished her figurehead and exhibited her logbook! And they builded her timbers into an old mill, where they can show them to you to-day, scarred with cannon shot.

Yes, and how America lamented! Aye, and grew angry in her distress and cried for vengeance! Many times during the trial which followed in the investigation of the causes for the vessel's loss and capture, must have young William Cox wished that he were dead, that it had been he the British cutlasses and musket-balls had hacked to pieces. The navy had lost a ship in single combat, — the press and the authorities did not like that, — some one must suffer. What excuse was there that could hold good? said they — the great public which clamored for a reason. And so in the flush of the hot feeling he was sentenced by court martial; sen-

tenced and disgraced. The charge of cowardice was disproved. From that he was exonerated — he had been wounded. But why had he not cut down the men as they left their guns? (one man against fifty, forsooth!) Why had he left the deck and gone below? Why had he stayed for one moment's time at the side of his dying friend and leader? And so he was made the scapegoat, although if he had been six men or ten, he could not have prevented what had happened. What is the use of "ifs"? The best ship had won. But when the trial was over, two hearts were broken. The young officer was execrated by those that did not know, and yet who talk and write. Could he dare just then to ask a woman's hand?

The navy pitied him, the scapegoat of the *Chesapeake*. How he petitioned to be given a chance to win back his fair name, and how often it was denied him! The members of the court that sentenced him wrote kindly letters almost without exception. But even the brave Decatur did not dare to help him — public opinion is more formidable to face than an armed ship. And so William Cox, maybe in the hope that an honorable death would visit him, shouldered a musket and fought as a common soldier in the ranks on land.

And when the war was over, he sought refuge in the new country of the west, where perhaps they

would not know. And there he lived and died; died an old man, honored and respected by his neighbors. But those that loved him marvelled at one thing; he never smiled. And even his grandchildren (for he married late in life) knew not that he had once been a gay young lieutenant with a shining epaulet on his left shoulder. They never heard that he had started one fine June day to find glory and fame; and that death had come near to him but passed him by, which he had more than once regretted bitterly.

After he had been laid to rest letters and papers were found showing that to the last he had been trying to have his name placed back upon the navy lists. But if they were too angry to listen before in their deep chagrin, they were too busy now; they had other things to think about. And people who wrote history, aye and taught it in the schools, did not search dispassionately for what had occurred to view the facts. They took the feverish verdict of the times and applied adjectives to his conduct that were out of place; some called it "pusillanimous" — "cowardly." We can look at things differently now, and judge them for their worth. There is proof enough to clear his name, so be it cleared if these few words can help to do it.

THE LOSS OF THE *VIXEN*



THE LOSS OF THE *VIXEN*

ON the 22d of October, 1812, at nine A.M., the United States brig *Vixen* crossed St. Mary's bar outward bound for a cruise to the southward. It was not expected that she would be absent from home waters for more than a month. Her commander was George W. Reed, a good officer, although he had had little experience in actual warfare. The hundred and ten men under his immediate command had trust in his judgment and were all animated with a hope of coming in again with one of the enemy under their lee, or at least they trusted that they should be fortunate enough to make one or two rich captures and return with prize money to their credit. As one of the *Vixen's* crew wrote: "All hands were in high health and spirits, and filled with the idea of soon returning with some fruit of the consequence of the war."

Day after day the *Vixen* sailed on and saw one sail after another; but owing to her having been well to the leeward in every case she had been unable to bring any to close quarters. On the tenth morning after her departure a sail was descried, and this

time it so happened that the little brig was well to the windward. Setting every stitch of her canvas, she made after the stranger. Judging from all reports, the *Vixen's* intentions must have been better than her powers of putting them into practice; for if her legs had been faster, so to speak, the expectations of her crew might have been answered, and this story (which is nothing but a record of events, however) would never have had a chance to be written. So it is safe to draw the conclusion that she was not as fast as many of our little vessels were at this period of our naval history.

While chasing the strange sail, another was perceived to be bearing down from the northwest. This put another face on the matter. The *Vixen* hauled her wind and waited. As it was perceived the second stranger was undoubtedly armed and was a large brig, Reed called his men together as was the custom and made the following little speech: —

"Now, my lads, there she is; I expect every man to stand to his guns. Don't fire a gun until you are within pistol shot; take good aim and show her fair play."

As the vessel came on without raising her flag, she fired a broadside of round and grape, which, however, served no other purpose than to churn the water into foam some distance ahead of the *Vixen's* bow. The latter returned the compliment, and planted a

double-shotted eighteen-pound charge in her antagonist's hull, above the sternpost. Again the stranger fired and missed, although at musket-shot distance.

Now, odd to relate, the unknown ran up signals, which, not understanding, Captain Reed replied to with an assortment of grape. At this the signals came down and the Spanish colors went up in their place. Bitter was the disappointment; she was to be no costly prize, after all. Seeing there was some difficulty on board of her, Captain Reed lowered a boat, and ascertained that she was a Spanish brig of fourteen guns from Havana, bound for Cadiz. Finding out that she only had two or three men slightly wounded, Captain Reed went on his way, after regretting that the "mistake" had occurred. However, in the log there was entered on this day that "owing to the good chance for target practice the morning had not been spent amiss."

For just one month everything seemed to run away from the poor little *Vixen*. The men were getting discouraged. They would see a convoy, most probably made up of rich merchantmen, somewhere off to leeward, and then a fog would shut down, and when it cleared away nothing would be seen but an expanse of empty horizon. With nothing done, and a sorry and disappointed crew, she was within two days' sail of St. Mary's, in the state of Maryland, when as luck would have it the man

at the masthead reported a sail on the starboard beam.

Much better would it have been for the little *Vixen* if the fog had closed down or a contrary wind had sprung up, or had she gone about her business and made for home as soon as possible. It was just daylight in the morning. Steering-sails were set on both sides as she was headed out again to meet the stranger, who had evidently not observed her presence. By six o'clock it was made out that the unknown was a frigate and no less. This was more than the *Vixen* had bargained for. With all her canvas standing as it was, she tacked ship and hauled up on the wind, which was extremely light. But the frigate proved herself to be a good one at going; she had set all of her light canvas that she could, and it was a caution the way she came down upon the little brig.

Although it is only a preliminary to the story, which has another side than that of the amusing, one cannot read an extract from the *Vixen's* log without feeling inclined to smile. Therefore to quote: "At ten, finding the chase gained on us, increasingly, commenced starting water out of the fore and main holds to lighten the brig. At eleven dead calm; out sweeps and continued rowing without intermission until twelve. Slow work; but we had now gained some advantage over the chase.

Then a breeze springing up we quickly lost it. In sweeps, and to lighten the brig still more, hove every article, in and under the boats, overboard. Stationed hands by the anchors to cut them away when ordered. Half past twelve P.M., discharged all the shot from the racks. At one, cut away both anchors. At two P.M., the chase still gaining, hove two elegant brass nine-pounders after the anchors. Chase still gained. Broached all the water in the casks, hove over all our broadside guns, and everything that seemed to carry weight. Finding that in despite of our exertions the *Vixen* would not sail an inch faster than her old gait, we now had the melancholy satisfaction of knowing our capture was a certainty. But we were determined to use every exertion to avoid it. Thus we commenced manœuvring with the sails, which kept the men on the jump and had only the effect of putting off the capture for an hour or two. At three P.M., all her guns were visible, at half past, coming up, hand over hand, she gave us a shot which fell short. A few minutes later another was sent which went between our foremast and mainmast. Answered by running up our colors and firing a musket to windward. The chase having English colors up, and as it would have been madness to engage her, we fired another shot to leeward and hauled our colors down. At four P.M., she ranged alongside."

And now, strange to say, all those on board the brig were astonished to see that the frigate had the word "Constellation" painted on her stern. The crew of the *Vixen* looked at each other in astonishment. Had there been another mistake? But there was something unmistakably English about the cut of her jib, and the red coats of a party of marines who were scrambling down into a boat which she had lowered plainly showed her character. Besides this, Captain Reed knew well that the Yankee *Constellation* was aground in the mud-flats of the James River, where she stayed during the war.

The officer, who was soon on board, with his seamen and marines, informed Captain Reed and his lieutenants that the *Vixen* was a prize to His Britannic Majesty's frigate *Southampton*, thirty-six guns, Sir James Lucas Yeo, commander. At once Captain Reed entered the English boat and went on board the frigate. As he rode close under the stern he saw that the word "Constellation" had been painted on a wide strip of canvas, tacked neatly over the name "Southampton." He did not ask the reason for this; it was easy to guess. If she happened to put in to one of the small harbors along the coast, it would conceal successfully her identity. Probably Sir James did not know that the real *Constellation* was fast in the mud-flat.

Sir James was a gentleman and a nobleman by

action as well as by birth, and his very first doing proved it. He came forward to meet Captain Reed and lifted his hat in a courtly salute; Captain Reed presented the hilt of his sword in token of surrender.

"No, no, sir," spoke up the Captain of the *Southampton*. "I cannot accept this from you; and I wish to commend you, sir, upon the skill you displayed in endeavoring to save your vessel. My ship is a very fast one."

"And mine a very slow one," put in Captain Reed.

"But I am sure you did everything that any one could do to get speed out of her.

"We hove everything overboard but our top sides and scantlings," returned Reed.

The officers standing about smiled, for the *Vixen's* frantic endeavors to escape had been watched closely through the glass.

The kindness shown to the brig's commander was extended in every way to the other officers and to the crew also. As the frigate was very crowded, but seventy of the *Vixen's* men were transferred to her. The other forty were kept as prisoners on board their own vessel. Every man was allowed to take his dunnage, and the prisoners on board the *Southampton* were given the run of the forward and main holds, although the hatchways were closely

guarded by armed sentinels. Excepting for the confinement, which was absolutely necessary, of course, and which was in direct accordance with the rules of war, the prisoners suffered no inconvenience. Twice a day in details of twenty they were permitted to be on deck to enjoy the fresh air. The *Southampton's* crew were already on short allowance, owing to their having been at sea for some length of time, and the dole allowed the Americans was almost, if not quite, equal to that given the Englishmen. The officers were treated with the greatest of politeness and civility, and Captain Reed dined daily with Sir James in the cabin. All hands voted him a fine man and gentleman, and that he was a naval officer was proved conclusively enough by his actions subsequently when at the head of the British operations on the Lakes.

Five days after the capture the weather was fine, but a small sea was running. The *Southampton*, under easy sail, was leading, and crowding on all she could carry; the *Vixen* managed to keep within signalling distance of her. In three or four days every one expected to be anchored safe in Jamaica.

It was about half past eleven on a bright starry night when the lookout forward suddenly gave the cry, "Land ho!" A line of breakers could be seen about two miles to the westward, and above them the shores of a little island, at its highest point but

twelve or fourteen feet above the water. Evidently the sailing-master of the frigate was out of his course. He probably had not allowed for the drift of one of those strange Gulf currents which have caused the destruction of many a fine ship.

The *Southampton* was put about in a hurry, and as she was such a good sailer and was so quick in manœuvring, no danger was apprehended, and she jogged along to the eastward to escape the proximity of the shoals. The *Vixen* was following her and taking in some of her sail as the wind commenced to blow much fresher. At twelve o'clock the sky had darkened, and it was difficult for one vessel to distinguish the other, although in the early part of the evening, by the aid of the moon and stars, everything had been visible. The mid-watch was just coming on, when, with a sudden shock, the *Southampton* struck on a sunken ledge of rocks; but she slid over the first, tearing the sheathing from her hull and wedging herself firmly in at the stern. Immediately a gun was fired to warn the *Vixen*, that was following in the wake; and also to be a signal of distress, as the greatest consternation prevailed now on board the frigate — that was leaking badly. But the usual ill fortune of the *Vixen* pursued her. At first she hove to and shortened sail, preparing to come to the frigate's assistance. Just as she was about to heave to the second time and lower a boat, she struck

with such a vicious force that her bows drove high out of water, she was stove in completely, and all the prisoners, who had been wondering what was going on, now terrified and in great fear of immediate death, rushed up on deck to see a strange sight. It was pitch dark; the waves were breaking on every hand, and off the port bow the big frigate could be seen hard and fast, signalling in great distress.

Her position, in fact, was much worse than that of the brig, for she was filling and settling rapidly. Everything was being done that knowledge and good seamanship could suggest or direct. The top-gallant yards and masts were sent down, and top-masts were struck; and notwithstanding the sea was very rough, two boats were lowered, and although one was crushed against the vessel's side, the other set out to search for a safe passage through the reef. On board the *Vixen* the boats had been called away, and the American and English crews were mingled, but without confusion. A Yankee sat beside John Bull on a thwart, and deeming that their own vessel was in no immediate danger, but that the *Southampton* was about to sink, they started to act the part of life-savers and rescue as many of the frigate's crew as they could. There was no thought of their being enemies, no observance of the differences between prisoners and captors; all sought to act for the cause of humanity and to save human life. But they had



"Everything was done that good seamanship could direct."



not proceeded far from the side of the brig when they were called back in a hurry. The *Vixen* had slipped from her firm position on the jagged rock and was surely sinking. So instead of being a rescue party to others they found they had all they could do to save themselves. But every man was taken off and brought on board of the *Southampton*.

Daylight was waited for most anxiously, and when it came, a dreary prospect was before the ship-wrecked ones. Not far away was a low island that was pronounced at once to be the island of Conception. Nothing but the topgallant masts of the *Vixen* showed above the water, as she had sunk during the night. The *Southampton's* pumps had been kept going for six hours. But she was so badly bilged, and the water was gaining so fast, that her hours were numbered. With a rising sea there was immediate danger of her going to pieces, and in her crowded condition the consequent loss of life would have been too terrible to think of. It was a row of about ten miles from the reef on which the ship lay to the distant low-lying, sandy shore. All the boats were made ready, a raft was built and floated alongside, and the boatswain, obeying orders from the quarter-deck, began bawling: "Away there, you Vixens, away!" So the prisoners were to go first; but since the vessels had struck they had not been treated as prisoners at all. They

had obeyed Sir James's orders as though they were members of his own crew, and they had not been shown the slightest evidences of bad blood or ill feeling on the part of the ordinary seamen. Before the day was over all the crew had been transferred to the island, and a boatload of provisions had been safely landed. Sir James and his officers spent the first night on board ship; but on the following morning, as she showed all evidences of a speedy breaking up, a tent was made for him on shore.

A strange life now followed. The great lack felt upon the island was that of proper drinking-water. Conches and shellfish and land-crabs there were in plenty. The four hundred odd men who now found themselves marooned on this island far removed from the usual course of trade, and but seldom visited, had to depend upon a small pond for their drinking-supply. If this should be exhausted, their position would be perilous in the extreme. Two boats had been despatched to summon aid if possible. One to see if there were not some cruiser at Cat Island, with orders to proceed to Nassau, and the other to make for the island of Exhuma.

A little settlement composed of tents and wigwams made from ship's wreckage soon grew up. Friend and foe mingled together in hunting for conches, or in sports to while away the time.

After a week a small vessel arrived from Cat Island, for the message calling for help had been received, bringing eighteen sheep and a quantity of meal, and the skipper showed where there was hidden a well which the mariners had failed to discover. An empty hogshead was sunk, and a sign-post erected on which was cut "The Southampton's Well, November, 1812." For many years it stood there. The sheep did not last long, and soon resort was had again to the conches. On the eighth of December, three English vessels arrived, the *Caledonia*, a cutter, *Rolla*, privateer, and the government brig *Rhodian*. Captain Sir James Yeo made a speech to his crew and their "guests," which was the term he used in referring to the Vixens, in which he thanked the latter for their assistance, their cheerfulness and good behavior, and he stated that he would do everything in his power to help get them exchanged, or provide them with a cartel to take them to their own country on their arrival at Jamaica, whither they were bound. Then, forming into a ragged company, arm in arm, Yankee sailors and British tars marched out from their little settlement, a fifer at their heads playing The Girl I Left Behind Me. Leaving their little island to the mercies of the half-breed wreckers whose small craft swarmed about, they sailed away. The rescued "guests" were prisoners again.

IN THE HARBOR OF FAYAL

IN THE HARBOR OF FAYAL

ON the lake front at Chicago during the World's Fair, close by the entrance to the long walk that led out to the marvellously constructed imitation battle-ship, the *Illinois*, rested an old iron muzzle-loader. It was a clumsy-looking piece of ordnance compared to the shining, complicated bits of machinery that compose the batteries of a modern war-ship. It looked very out of date and harmless, and people who did not know its history passed it by with hardly a second glance. But yet this old gun had taken more white men's lives in battle than all the great modern breech-loaders on the fleets of Europe combined to-day. It was but nine or ten feet long and threw a solid ball twenty-four pounds in weight. A small inscription on a metal plate told the inquisitive that the gun was the "Long Tom," from the privateer *General Armstrong*, that had been sunk in the harbor of Fayal, in September of the year 1814; that it had subsequently been raised and presented by the Portuguese government to the United States. There were some who knew the

story, for it had been told many times, and long years ago the country rang with it. Every one then knew the main facts of the incident, and because of a long controversy in the courts owing to claims that arose from the action for indemnity against the Portuguese government, the matter was kept alive up to a very recent date. But an unfamiliar story in connection with a well-known fact may not be amiss, and this is a tale of the harbor of Fayal that perhaps few have heard before.

But to get to the telling of it, it is necessary to recount a good deal of what is recorded history.

The *General Armstrong* was a privateer brig outfitted at New York. She was owned in part by a New York merchant, a Mr. Havens, and in part by her commander, Samuel C. Reid, and a better sailor never stood in sea-boots. She was not a big ship; but her armament had been skilfully chosen. Her crew of picked men had been drilled man-of-war fashion. She mounted eight long nine-pounders, four on a side, and amidships she carried the big twenty-four-pounder before referred to. Her First Lieutenant was a Mr. Alexander O. Williams, a very young man, but a thorough and practical seaman; her Second was named Worth; her Third Lieutenant's name was Johnson; her crew, all Americans, numbered ninety souls all told. Among them was an active, handsome fellow, named

William Copeland. He was down on the privateer's books as able seaman; but before the *General Armstrong* had been two weeks at sea, Copeland was promoted for meritorious conduct in an action with a British armed schooner, that was sent home as a prize, to be quarter gunner. It was Reid and himself that squinted along the black barrel of the old Long Tom, when she fought in the harbor of Fayal.

It was the 26th day of September that the *General Armstrong* cast anchor there. The weather had been very fine, and Captain Reid, very proud of his vessel, had done everything to make her look smart and tidy. Her rigging was all tuned up to concert pitch; her decks were as white as sand and holystone could make them, and the men, contrary to the habit of most privateers, were dressed in suits of white duck and blue. The American Consul, John D. Dabney, felt a thrill of pride as he saw the man-of-war fashion with which the *General Armstrong* came to anchor. As the long white gig came rolling up to the pier, and the men boated their oars, Mr. Dabney recognized that the officer sitting in the stern sheets was an old friend of his.

"Ah, Captain Reid," he exclaimed. "Glad to see you. My compliments to you on the appearance of your vessel. I thought at first that she must be one of the regular navy; in fact, I took her for the *Enterprise*."

"Well, I flatter myself that she is quite as ship-shape," returned Captain Reid. "And I have to work my crew pretty hard to keep from showing how well satisfied I am with them. I tell you, Dabney, it isn't every man that has had such a fine lot of fellows under him. As to my success so far, it has been fair enough; but I'd really like to measure distances and exchange a few shots with some of His Majesty's little fellows."

"You have come to a good place to look for them," Dabney returned. "It is seldom that a week passes without having one or more of them drop anchor in the roads."

Chatting together in this friendly fashion, the two gentlemen went up into the town. It was late in the evening before Reid came to the water-front to signal for his boat. Dabney was still with him. They walked down to the end of the pier, and Reid suddenly pointed: —

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed, "here we come," and following his finger Dabney saw three big vessels lazily moving along before the slight wind, toward the harbor entrance. Their earlier approach had been hidden by the headlands.

The harbor of Fayal is surrounded by hills, on the slopes of which the town is built, and the bay extends in a semicircle with two wide-reaching arms. The water runs deep into the shore. The sun was

setting in the calm evening sky, and there was scarce enough movement on the surface of the bay to catch the red reflections. Dabney turned to Captain Reid after the first long look.

"English, or else I'm much mistaken," he said quietly.

"Not the least doubt of it in my mind," Reid returned, "and if there was more of a wind, by Jove, I'd try to get out of this. . . . Do you think it is safe to stay?"

"It is a neutral port," Dabney returned, "and Portugal and England have been such friends, that I do not think John Bull would take advantage of his position here. In my opinion they will respect the neutrality."

"Well, they won't catch me napping," Reid returned, as he stepped into the gig; and after requesting the Consul's presence at dinner on the following evening, he gave the order to shove off, and pulled away for his vessel.

Mr. Williams, the First Lieutenant, met him at the gangway. "You have observed our friends yonder?" he asked, pitching his thumb over his shoulder. "I wish we were out of here."

"So do I," Reid returned, "but we must make the best of it."

It was a beautiful sight to see the great square-rigged ships come to anchor. Forward and aft all

hands were on deck watching the English men-of-war perform the manœuvre.

"Well done!" exclaimed William Copeland, the quarter gunner, turning to a group of his messmates. "It takes an Englishman or a Yankee to make a vessel behave as if she were alive. By Davy's locker!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I know that nearest ship; it's the *Plantagenet*, I'll bet my prize money. Good cause have I to remember her; she picked me up in the North Sea and I served three years in her confounded carcass. Three wicked, sweating years, my lads."

"Where did you leave her, Bill?" asked one of the seamen standing near him.

"At Cape Town, during the war against the Dutch. I'll spin the yarn to you some day. My brother and I were took at the same time. The last I seed of him was when we lowered ourselves out of the sick bay into the water to swim a good three miles to the whaler — that was three years ago."

"Do you reckon he was drownded, Bill?"

"Reckon so. Leastways I haven't heard from him, poor lad!"

Further talk was interrupted by an order from the quarter-deck calling away the first cutter to carry a stream anchor in towards shore in order to warp the brig close under the walls of the "castle" a little battery of four or five guns that commanded

the inner harbor. Captain Reid's suspicions had been awakened by seeing a boat put off from the shore, and noticing that one of the frigates was getting up her anchor preparatory to drawing in nearer. In less than half an hour he was moored stem and stern so close under the walls of the little fort that he could have hurled a marline-spike against the walls from his own quarter-deck. As it grew darker he could see from the flashing of lights that the English vessels were holding communication with one another, and occasionally across the water would come the sound of creaking blocks or the lilt of a pipe. He knew well enough that such goings on were not without some object, and calling all of his officers aft they held a short consultation. It was exactly eight o'clock in the evening. From shore there came a sound of fiddles and singing. Although Captain Reid had promised the men liberty that evening, owing to the position of affairs the order had been rescinded, but nevertheless there was some grumbling in the forecastle; for if a sailor doesn't grumble when he gets a chance, he is not a sailor.

"I'll be shot if I can see why the old man won't let us ashore," growled a sturdy young topman. "D'ye hear them fiddles, Jack? Can't you see the señoritas adancin'? My heels itch for the touch of a springy floor and my arm has a crook to it

that would just fit a neat young waist. Do you remember — "

"Stow your jaw, Dummer," broke in a heavy voice half angrily. "And you too, Merrick, clap a stopper on it," turning to another of the malcontents. "Hush now, listen all hands. . . . Oars! can't ye hear 'em? And muffled too, by the Piper! Pass the word below; all hands!" With that William Copeland ran aft to the quarter-deck. Captain Reid met him at the mast.

"Their boats are coming, sir," Copeland whispered excitedly; "five or six of 'em, I should judge."

"Are the broadside guns ready?"

"Aye, aye, sir, and double-shotted; two of them with grape and canister."

"How's the Long Tom?"

"Ready to speak for himself, sir," Copeland replied with a touch of pride, for the big gun was his especial pet.

The three lieutenants had now grouped close together. "See that the magazine is opened, Mr. Worth, and Mr. Williams call the men to their stations quietly. They will try to come in on the port hand most probably. Gentlemen, to your stations. No firing until you get the word from the quarter-deck, and stop all talking on the ship."

Even the sentry, patrolling his beat on the castle walls, did not hear or notice anything extraordinary

on board the privateer, so silently were the orders followed out. The moon was struggling to pierce through the thin, filmy clouds that obscured her light. It was one of those nights when objects appear suddenly out of the invisible and take shape with distinctness close to hand. But every one could hear the sounds now.

"Thrum, thrum, thrum," the swing of oars; despite that the rhythm was muffled and subdued.

Reid was leaning over the rail with a night glass aimed in the direction of the frigate. A figure hurried to his side. It was Lieutenant Williams. "We can see them from for'ard, sir," he said breathlessly. "Everything is ready, and there's surely some mischief afoot."

"Yes, I can see them now; four of them, chock a block with men," Reid returned, closing the glass with a snap. "Now stand by, all hands, for orders." Then raising his voice, he shot the following question out into the semi-darkness: "On board the boats, there! There is no landing here. Keep away from our side."

The rowing ceased; but it was only an instant and then it began again.

"I warn you to come no nearer!" shouted Reid. "You do so at your peril."

Four dark shapes were now visible without the aid of any glass. The plash of the oars could be

heard as they caught the water. Reid just noticed the figure of William Copeland bending over the breech of the Long Tom, whose muzzle extended across the bulwarks.

"Keep off or I shall fire!" he warned for the third time. There came an answer to this clear enough to be heard by every man standing at the guns.

"Give way, lads, together."

"Fire!" roared Reid, in a voice that must have been heard distinctly along the shore. The reply was a scarlet burst of flame and a crash that sent the echoes up the hills. It stopped the fiddles in the dance-house; it set the drums and bugles rolling and tooting in the fortress, and the American Consul, sitting over his coffee on the public square, jumped to his feet, and ran, followed by a clamoring crowd, to the pier-head.

From the direction of the boats came a confusion of orders following the broadside. Groans and shrieks for help arose from the darkness. Some spurts of flame came quickly and several musket-balls whistled over the *Armstrong's* deck. Then the loud report of a heavy boat gun, and a groan and cry followed immediately from the brig's forecastle.

All was silent now except for the sound of plashing in the water and some groans and muffled cries. Reid was about to hail when he saw three men hurrying aft with a heavy burden in their arms.

"It's Mr. Williams, sir; he's shot in the head, and Dummer, of the forward division, sir, is killed," one of them said gruffly. Poor Dummer! He would dance no more with the señoritas — there were to be no more liberty parties for him.

Reid's intention of lowering away a boat faded from his mind. There would be more of the same sort of work before long; that he knew well. One of the boats had been sunk, for the wreck came drifting in close to the brig's side. The other three could be heard making off to the ships, their rowing growing fainter every minute. Lieutenants Worth and Johnson came aft to report.

"We are in for it, gentlemen," said Reid; "but they won't cut this vessel out without more discussion on the subject. The idea of such treachery in a friendly harbor! They received their just deserts." His anger got the better of him for an instant, and he could say no more. "Poor Williams!" he murmured at last. "Is he badly hurt?"

"He is mortally wounded, sir, I am afraid," Mr. Johnson returned.

"A good friend and a fine officer gone," put in Lieutenant Worth. "So much for this night's work."

"Do not fear; there'll be more of it, and we'll have our hands full," Reid continued. "Mr. Johnson, you will see that the boarding-nettings are

spread, and load the midship gun with lagrange and a star shot. Have pikes and cutlasses ready."

"Are you going ashore, sir, to see the commander of the fort? He surely should protect us?" asked Mr. Worth.

"We need count no longer on him," was Reid's rejoinder. "We will have to do our own protecting. See that every musket and pistol is loaded and laid handy and, stay," he added, "cut away the bulwarks just abaft the gangway and bring two of those starboard guns across the deck. We will need them all, to my way of thinking."

The crowds gathered on the shore could hear the sounds of preparation. From the English squadron also came a babble of orders and movement. The lights were doubled in number. Every port shone brightly. The moon had now risen until objects could be seen quite plainly.

"They are preparing for an attack in force," Reid said, handing the glass to Mr. Johnson, who had already seen that the boarding-nettings had been spread above the railing. The men forward were busy setting some spare spars to act as booms to keep the boats from gaining the vessel's bows. Time passed swiftly. At twelve o'clock the oars began again. But they were not muffled now! "Click, clock," they came onward with a rush. Voices could be heard urging the rowers to more

exertion, as if they were racing crews out for a practice spin. Reid was levelling the glass.

"Ten, twelve, thirteen, fourteen — fourteen boats loaded to the guards," he said. "God's love, there must be four hundred men: they mean to take us if they can." He looked down at his own little deck. He had less than ninety now; but they were ninety stout, good fellows who would not flinch. In the rays of the battle lanterns and the pale light of the moon, Captain Reid saw that they were ready to fight their last fight maybe.

It was no time to make a speech; but the men could hear every word he said without gathering nearer. "Lads," he said, "reserve your fire until you get the word from me. Don't waste a single shot, and remember this: aim low. . . . Copeland!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Cover that leading boat."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

A big pinnace or barge, holding perhaps eighty men, was heading the flotilla by almost a hundred feet. The grinding of a handspike on the deck broke the silence, as the Long Tom was slewed about to bear upon her.

"Handsomely now, men," cajoled Copeland. "Handsomely; that's well."

The great boat was rowing in directly on that gun

as if towed by a line. She was heading on to death and destruction!

Consul Dabney, standing with the anxious crowd on the shore, held his breath.

Was Reid going to submit to be taken without striking another blow? Not much. With a long flare of flame that leaped from the *Armstrong's* side, arose a great shout from the spectators.

The bow of the pinnace was stove in, and she pitched forward into the water like an angry bull brought to his knees by a rifle shot. Men absolutely boiled out of her. The moonlit water was dotted with black objects; some threshing with their arms, others silent and motionless. There came a rattling reply of small-arms from the boats, and the long nines answered them. The action was on in earnest. No one can gainsay the courage that was displayed by the attacking force. They were Englishmen; it is not necessary to say more. The firing became incessant. The men on the *Armstrong* had scarce time to reload their guns. They would snatch up a pistol here and a musket there and fire out at the water that was crisscrossed with the red flashes of the answering shots. More than once a boat had reached the side. On two occasions men had sprung to the bulwarks, and clung to the boarding-nettings until shot away. Every now and then the Long Tom would let go a half-bucketful of grape and



"There was a figure crawling up below him."

scrap iron, hurling death into the boats. Every one of the privateer's crew seemed gifted with four arms. From one point of attack to another they chased about the deck. It seemed as if she numbered three times her complement. Bill Copeland was fighting like a demon. Twice had he run along the top of the bulwarks, exposed to every aim. Suddenly he saw that one of the boats had worked around to the starboad side. Giving the alarm, and followed by a half-score of the after-guard, he ran across to meet this unexpected danger. One of the men who followed him caught up a twenty-four-pound solid shot in his arms as he ran. Another followed his example. Both shot crashed through the bottom of the boat, and a volley was poured down into them. But three or four of the men had already reached the chains.

Copeland sprang to the bulwarks with his cutlass in his hand. There was a figure crawling up below him. Leaning forward, he made a quick stroke that would have severed the man's throat had he not leaned back suddenly and avoided it. Again he drew back his sharpened cutlass for the death blow, and then he saw that the fellow was unarmed. Something stayed his hand; he bent still further forward, and just as the Englishman was about to fall back into the water, he grasped him by the wrist.

"My God, Jed!" he cried, and exerting all his strength he dragged his prisoner over the rail on to the deck. Those who had time to witness it, saw a curious sight. There was Bill Copeland holding fast to another man, their arms on each other's shoulders.

"Jed, don't ye know me?" Bill was crying; "but, Lord love ye lad, you 're wounded." A shudder went through him as he realized how close he had been to sending home that fatal thrust. The man with a pigtail down his back leaned forward weakly.

"I'm hurted bad, Bill," he said. "But go on and fight; leave me alone; egad, you've whipped 'em." Sure enough, the firing had now slackened. Four or five of the boats had retreated beyond gun shot. *They were all that could do so unaided.*

"Cease firing!" ordered Captain Reid, hastening about the deck. "Cease firing here! They have given up. Where is Mr. Johnson?" he roared, pushing his way into a group of men who were about to reload one of the nine-pounders. He had to cuff his way amongst them to make them desist. "Where is Mr. Johnson?" he repeated.

"He's wounded, sir."

"And Mr. Worth is wounded too, sir," put in another man. "I helped him below myself."

As suddenly as the action had begun it had

ended. By the light of a lantern Captain Reid glanced at his watch. It was forty minutes since the first gun had been fired. He looked about his decks. Although they were littered with loose running-gear, handspikes, cutlasses, and muskets, at the sight his heart gave a great bound of joy. There were no mangled figures or pools of slippery blood. It seemed hardly possible.

But from the wreckage in the water came groans and cries. He looked over the side. There lay, rocking, two broken boats filled with huddled figures, some moving weakly.

"Here!" he shouted to some of the men. "Bear a hand; save all we can."

It was a sudden transition, this, from taking life to saving it; but the men turned to with a will. In one of the boats twelve dead bodies were found, and but seventeen of her crew had escaped with their lives, and they were all badly wounded. Of the four hundred men who had commenced that bold attack, only one-half returned to the ships unhurt. Reid hurried down into the cockpit. It seemed past believing. *But two of his men, including the brave Williams, had been killed, and but seven wounded!* This is history.

But a sight he saw attracted the Captain's attention. It was Bill Copeland sitting on the deck, with his arms about a pale figure whose head lay in Cope-

was correct, then the Portuguese government was bound to hand them over as deserters, or place themselves in a bad position with England. After a long deliberation, Reid consented to have his men submit to an examination. They were all arrested, and brought to town, and not a single deserter was found among them!

But what of Copeland, the wounded prisoner? He lay hidden in one of the houses of a friendly Portuguese, and his name was probably reported on the *Plantagenet's* books as "missing." On the 28th of the month, two British sloops of war, the *Thais* and *Clypso*, came into port, and were immediately sent back to England with the British wounded. The two Copeland brothers returned to the United States, with the rest of the *Armstrong's* crew, and both served in the navy for the rest of the war.

The owners of the *Armstrong* attempted for many years to obtain redress for the loss of their ship. Again and again were they put off and denied. But in this year, 1897, some money was received, and strange to say, was paid to the widow of the owner, Mr. Havens. She died but a short time ago, at the age of ninety-eight, at Stamford, Connecticut.

THE ESCAPE OF SYMINGTON

THE ESCAPE OF SYMINGTON

CAPTAIN MYRON SYMINGTON was a long-legged Yankee. There was no mistaking him for anything else but an out-and-out downeaster. As to the length of his underpinning, that was apparent also. When seated, he did not appear above the average height; but when erect he stood head and shoulders above the crowd, so of course it was in his legs. Symington spoke English with a lazy drawl, and conversation ebbed from him much after the manner that smoke issues from a tall chimney on a perfectly still day—it rolled forth in slow volumes. But Symington's French was very different; he could be clearly understood, for he spoke it well; but he discharged every word like a pistol shot, and he paused between each sentence as if he had to load and prime, and cast loose for the next.

Since the beginning of the war Symington had not been to America. But he had sent many messages thither; and although his headquarters were at Brest when ashore, and the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay when afloat, his name had become

well known in the United States, and he had done a thriving international business on his own account — which may require some explaining.

The little privateer *Rattler* (of which he was owner and commander) had sent home no less than twenty vessels that had been snapped up when almost under the guns of England's coastwise fortresses. Whenever he needed provisioning or recruiting, Symington would make for one of the French ports, run the blockade that the English had established the whole length of the coast, drop his anchor in the harbor, and then get anything he chose for the mere asking for it; for Symington's name was as good and in fact better than the promise of some governments. Years before the outbreak of the war Symington had commanded the fastest and luckiest Yankee craft engaged in the European trade that sailed from Baltimore or Boston. He was a good seaman, it was reputed that he was immensely wealthy, and many believed also that he possessed some charm or fetich that insured success. Certainly it had crowned his endeavors to divert the direction of Great Britain's proper freight ships.

Symington was sitting at a table in one of the cafés off the Rue Bonaparte in the city of Brest, and he had just finished a very heavy noonday meal. Suddenly glancing up, he saw a man go past the door leading from the hallway into the garden.

Lengthening himself to his full height by a succession of jerks, in a couple of strides he had caught the man by the elbow and almost pulled him back into the room.

"Just back, ain't ye, Captain Edgar?" he drawled.

"Post haste," the man replied, "from Paris."

"Any news?"

"Well, I should say there was. By Hickey, Captain, Napoleon's jig is up! Already the people are showing the white cockade, and those who yet fly the tricolor have the other in their pocket."

"So!" exclaimed Symington, prolonging the syllable until it sounded like a yawn; "then our friends the English will have a finger in the pie in short order. It is a shame that they will have to break up such a harmless and profitable business, this Channel cruising."

It was April of the year 1814. Europe had completed the humiliation of the little great man who had come nigh to conquering her, unaided. And as soon as the last of his ramparts were down, any one with common sense could see what would be the outcome of it all. The exiled King, Louis the Eighteenth, who had been hiding in London, would be placed upon the throne! To Great Britain more than to any other power he would owe his translation from debt, poverty, and seclusion to position, affluence, and a crown. From being

England's enemy, France would become her ally. Could it be expected of her to continue to harbor in her ports those ocean pests, the Yankee privateers, who had compelled England to give the services of two-thirds of her fighting force to convoying and guarding her merchant fleets?

Symington and his friend, the short man, seated themselves at a table and continued the conversation.

"I'd put to sea to-morrow if I had enough of a crew to work the old *Siren*," said the little Captain. "I had hard enough work getting into port after manning all my prizes. But if I could get four more good hands, I'd have enough."

"There are just fourteen men-o'-war and three battle-ships off the harbor mouth, and what chance would ye have of gettin' through this open weather?" grumbled Symington. "We'll have to wait until we get a good blow out of the southeast; that'll scatter 'em, and then, by Hick, we can make a try for it. Two weeks longer, and we'll probably have no show."

"I'll be startin' for Boston town some dark night this week, Captain Symington, just as soon as I get men enough to handle the *Siren's* main sheet, as I told ye."

"And I, too, Captain Edgar, as soon as I get enough hands to get up the *Rattler's* anchor. But I'll choose my weather, sir!"

After a few words more the two skippers shook hands and left the café, each bound to the water-front by a different direction. It was certainly a peculiar position that the Yankee craft found themselves occupying about this time in European waters. Sometimes they would be in a port where lay eight or ten half-dismantled frigates, and over twice as many smaller cruisers and merchantmen belonging to the Empire, all cooped up and kept in there by four or five English sloops of war, or perhaps a guard ship of fifty or sixty guns patrolling up and down the harbor mouth. On the other side of the water, however, the English had succeeded in blockading but one American frigate, the *Constellation*, early in the war. Afterwards for a few months they hemmed in the *United States*, the *Macedonian*, and the little *Hornet* in the harbor of New London; but what would not the United States have given to have possessed those thousands of idle guns that lay in the French naval stations? She would have manned the helms, spread the sails, and put those great hulks into motion. She might even have done a little "fleet sailing" on her own account.

But there was some excuse for France. Napoleon had depleted his seacoasts to fill his armies. There were not sufficient able seamen to answer the demand, and besides, so long had the French run away from the English at sea, that a thirty-eight-

gun frigate of the Empire had been known to escape a meeting with a British twenty-gun sloop by turning tail and making off. The French flag was a rarity afloat. So every time the Yankee privateers entered or left a port it was necessary to run the blockade that the British had established at the entrance. As this was the state of the home ports also, they had become quite used to it. Seldom or never were they caught in the act.

But the day came, as the Yankee captains had agreed it would, when Napoleon succumbed entirely. Out came the white cockades; the tricolor disappeared. No longer was it "the Emperor," but "the King," and the first request that England made was that the Yankee shipping in French ports should be confiscated and the privateers detained. Great was the consternation of the skippers; some who had crews sufficient in number to man their vessels put to sea instanter and were taken in by the Channel squadron forthwith. Others remained waiting for the weather to thicken and trusting that King Louis would hesitate long enough to give them a chance for life. But the order came at last. The privateers were to be allowed to leave the harbor any time they found a chance to do so; but before they left, the French King, who was holding fast to his rickety throne, and was merely kept in place by the supporting arms of England, Russia, and

Germany, issued a decree. It was to the effect that the vessels should sail unarmed; that their broadsides should be taken from them, their cutlasses and small-arms removed, and thus shorn of their teeth and claws, they should be allowed to depart. As every merchantman, almost without exception, in those days carried at least four or five guns handy on the spar deck, this decree was equivalent to presenting them to any English vessel that might get range of them. Before the order could be executed more of the vessels got to sea, and not a few were gobbled up at once by the English cruisers; some were forced to put back again, and only one or two ever reached the shores of America.

The day the news arrived early in May, Captain Edgar was one of the first to get his anchor in and make out past the headland as soon as dusk had settled. In a few minutes Symington, also, although his vessel was very short-handed, was getting up his mainsail, and he too would have sailed no doubt, had there not suddenly arisen a sound of firing from the offing. Of course there being now peace between France and England, it was possible for the English ships to anchor beside the Americans if they had chosen to do so, and in fact in some of the harbors so penned in were the privateers, that, as one captain expressed it, "they would have to sail

across the deck of a seventy-four to escape to sea." England had respected the neutrality of the French ports thus far; but if an American vessel was seen preparing to get under way, she would be watched carefully, and if not accompanied by an English ship, her going out would be signalled to the blockaders off the shore. As the cannonading was kept up for so long a time, Captain Symington supposed, or at least hoped, that the *Siren* had escaped her enemies. Perhaps the confusion that followed would be a good moment for him to take advantage of, and he determined to sail out at once.

But it was not to be; for hardly had he got under way when he was boarded by a cutter filled with armed men, under the command of a Frenchman, dressed in a voluminous coat and a huge cocked hat, who described himself in a breathless sentence as "Monsieur le Capitaine Georges Binda, Inspector of the Port for His Majesty, King Louis." But a few months previously he had been at Napoleon's beck and call, having been one of the recruiting officers of the district.

Captain Symington's expostulations were of no avail, although owing to his peculiar manner of speech, they appealed to the whole harbor.

His long twelve-pounder was taken from him, and his neat little battery of carronades, six on a side, were confiscated also. Before noon of the next

day the *Rattler* had been changed from a tiger cat to a harmless kitten.

The discomforting news also arrived that Captain Edgar had been blown out of the water, after he had almost succeeded in getting past the English line. This was most disheartening, and that very day many of the Americans, despairing of ever getting free, attempted to dispose of their ships by sale. But not so with Symington. He determined not to give up until compelled to; to hold out until the very last minute.

The *Rattler* was light in ballast, and in trim for fast sailing. There were enough men now on board of her to handle her at a pinch, and she could have shown a clean pair of heels to any one of the English cruisers then afloat. Although not altogether a beauty to look at, for she was a comparatively old vessel, she was marvellously quick in stays, and came about like a sharpie. In pointing, too, she was a marvel, and once given the windward gage she could choose her own distance. No man could sail the *Rattler* the way Symington could, and no skipper ever knew the capacities or character of his craft better than did the lank Yankee. She was his pet; why give her up to be sailed by a lubberly Frenchman? The very first chance he saw he was going to take. It arrived no later than the second evening after the despoiling.

The moon came up early in the morning; but about an hour or so before the time for her appearance a soft gray fog blew in from the sea. At first the great outline of a British troop-ship close alongside on the *Rattler's* port hand disappeared gradually. Then the numerous anchor lights and the lanterns of the town that had been twinkling brightly in the darkness became but hazy blurs of light through the thickening mist. But when the moon began to cast her silvery light, a marvellous thing happened that caused the second mate, who was on watch, to hurry down into the cabin and call Captain Symington to the deck. The rays of moonlight in the fog caused an opaque, impenetrable veil to surround the ship. So thick was it, that the sensation was as if a white cloth had been tied across the eyes. The masts disappeared a few feet above the deck. If one turned around, it was impossible to tell in which direction the vessel extended. The *Rattler* lay but a few hundred feet astern of a big French brig that was anchored with a stream anchor over her side to keep her from swinging in toward a point of rocks which was surmounted by a small battery. As soon as Captain Symington reached the deck he stepped across to the bulwarks, and lowering himself down as far as he could go by the chains he perceived what often happens in thick weather: the fog was lifted some feet from the sur-

face of the water, and close to the water objects could be discerned at some distance. There was not wind enough to sail; to use the sweeps would have called down on him a fleet of armed small craft in an instant! Well he knew that rather than see him escape, the transport would go afoul of him and try to explain matters afterwards.

Now Captain Symington had a remarkably retentive memory. It was said that he never had to look at a chart more than twice; that he could take a vessel over shoals where he had been only once before, and that, years previously. Now this gift stood him in good stead. Just ahead of him lay the big French brig. Within a cable's length of her, a large French man-of-war, but half dismantled; beyond, an English sloop; then two more vessels. Once outside of them, and there was nothing to prevent him from gaining the mouth of the harbor! How was it to be done? The fog might last for two or three hours, and yet again it might disappear at any moment. But Symington was not discouraged; a brilliant idea came to him; the crew were called into the cabin, and there by the dim light of a lantern Captain Symington explained his plan.

The men listened in astonishment. Many stories of wonderful escapes had they heard, and many adventures had they been through; but such a bold plan of action they had never heard proposed before.

When all hands returned to the deck, there was not a sound. Although having almost to feel their way, a light new cable was brought up and flaked neatly up and down the deck. Then Captain Symington took the end of it into the stern sheets of his gig, which was silently dropped into the water, and with four men pulling at the carefully muffled oars he made off from beneath the bows, heading for the big French brig, the cable noiselessly paying out into the water over the *Rattler's* bows. It did not take him long to make fast to the moorings of the brig. This done, he waited anxiously.

"They are heaving away now, sir," whispered one of the men in the bow of the boat. Sure enough, the cable had tautened under the strain that was being put upon it. Symington at first feared that some attention might be attracted on board the Frenchman; but there came no sound, and he knew that his people on board the *Rattler* had silently slipped moorings and that she had way upon her.

On board the privateer's deck, barefooted men were walking away with the cable over their shoulders and causing their light vessel to come boldly along through the water. At a certain length from where the cable was to be made fast, a bit of marline had been tied, and when this came inboard the orders were to 'vast heaving, belay, and drop the anchor that had been only "hove short"; that is,

lifted from the sand. Soon this point was reached. Symington, cast loose, came on board; a second cable was prepared and spliced to the first, and off he started to make fast to the next vessel lying farther out.

And thus did Symington warp himself beyond the mouth of the inner harbor to a place where he considered it safe enough to get out his sweeps. Manning these, for an hour and more he kept at it. But it was dangerous work. The tides were going down, and although he kept the lead going, he might run on one of the sand-bars at any moment. That he was well out of the channel he knew to a certainty. So at last he dropped anchor, silently, and patiently waited for the fog that had saved him so far, to clear up enough for him to get his bearings.

Toward daylight a slight breeze sprang up, and to his alarm Symington found that a stretch of low beach was under his lee, and it behooved him well to work the *Rattler* farther out. Getting sail enough up to enable him to trip his anchor, he drew away from shore. Slowly the fog closed down upon him again quite as thick as it had been some hours previously; but all at once the First Mate, who was forward, cried out in fright: —

"Starboard your helm! Hard a starboard!"

The *Rattler's* bow fell off a few points, and at

that instant there came the shock of a collision, followed by a hail in good sea-faring English, seemingly from up in the air.

"What are you doing there? What vessel is that?" Then there was some bawling and much noise of movement and another hail in a voice that had not yet spoken.

"On board that vessel! answer me, or I'll blow you out of the water!"

By this time Captain Symington was firing off his explosive French sentences, which, as it is impossible to give their full force even in the language in which they were spoken, we will translate.

"Who are you and what are you doing here? Answer."

"The *Cigalle* of Havre. I try to get into the harbor here."

There came a laugh from the direction of the strange vessel. "Strange sort of weather for a Frenchman to be sailing in, sir," some one observed. "More than likely one of the Yankees trying to get out."

That was exactly what Captain Symington was trying to do, but the collision with the stranger had carried away his port cathead, and with it the anchor had gone to the bottom. By the effect of this unfortunate accident, and the force of the tide, which was now against her, the *Rattler's* head was

swung around again, and before anything could prevent it, she once more went afoul of the big vessel, whose decks towered higher than her cross-trees. There she hung, under the other's lee, while the English commander, sometimes in French and sometimes in English, was cursing Symington for a clumsy Frenchman and threatening to send a shot on board of him.

It was daylight almost and the wind was freshening. Clearer and clearer the outlines of the great vessel could be seen.

She was an English seventy-four, that, trying to make the harbor, had been headed off by darkness and had anchored in the roads.

In ten minutes after the breeze began to blow, the air was free from mist. There was no use in trying to indulge in any deception now. The character of the small vessel had been discovered by the big one. A crowd of laughing officers lined the rail, and on her gallery appeared a number of ladies bound most probably for the new court of the new King. The wind was off shore. From the shrilling of whistles and babbling of orders it was seen that the battle-ship was getting under way. A man in gold lace leaned out over the rail and said in an off-hand manner: —

"On board the Yankee there! Keep under our lee and return to the harbor, or we'll sink you in-

stantly; play no tricks, if you value your safety. Mark you that."

Why it was that the Englishman did not drop a boat and put a prize crew on board the *Rattler*, it might be hard to guess. Symington feared that this would happen, and, although he gave no answer to the imperious order, he set about obeying it with every evidence of haste and alacrity.

But such clumsy work had never been seen before on board a Yankee privateer. Often in naval actions in the old sailing days, when orders were blared through a speaking-trumpet, and not given by little electric bells and signals, as now we have them, the "rule of contrary" was passed in order to deceive the enemy who might overhear and thus anticipate. "Hard a port" meant "hard a starboard." A vessel that was supposed to be on the point of luffing would bear away, sheets flying.

Now, on board the *Rattler*, although no such order had been passed, the men had understood well enough the whispered word. It is a well-known fact that the fore-and-aft rig was best understood in America, where it had really been brought to perfection. The English, after they had captured a vessel of the *Rattler's* class, never succeeded in getting the same sailing qualities out of her, and the upshot of it was that they generally changed her rigging and cut down her masts and sail plan. But

no crew was ever clumsier than was the privateer's on this occasion. They tumbled over one another, they got the halliards twisted, they pretended to be breaking their backs in getting in the anchor when they were not lifting a pound, and all the time the First Mate was running hither and thither like the busy man at the circus, chattering a jargon made up of scraps of Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish, while above all the confusion, Captain Symington's explosive French adjectives rang out like snaps of a whip.

There had not been the least doubt in the English officers' minds a moment since that the little vessel they were looking down upon was an American; but now they were somewhat puzzled, and the whole scene was so laughable that very soon the taffrail was lined again with a tittering crowd, who discussed, in very audible tones, their varying opinions.

But lazily the great ship was swinging about with a great creaking of yards and flapping of sails. Soon she was moving through the water. A few minutes later and the *Rattler* was in her wake, and Captain Symington, who certainly did not look French, despite his wonderful vocabulary, made a proud and elaborate bow, and lifted his great beaver hat to the ladies who were now on the quarter-deck enjoying the sight.

But if the English officers had been puzzled at

first and amused afterwards, there was one person on board H. M. S. *Ajax* who had enjoyed the same sensations in a more intensified fashion. He was looking out of one of the stern ports on the lower gun-deck. A short, thickset man, who did not belong to the battle-ship's company, for he was a prisoner. It was Captain Edgar, and it was the *Ajax* that had picked up the *Siren* in a sinking condition after she had sustained the fusillade of two nights previously. But every foot the *Rattler* sailed brought her further into the harbor and lessened the ultimate chances for escape. But that there was a plan in Captain Symington's mind, Edgar did not doubt. He knew that the *Rattler* was as handy as a whip, and he kept his eyes open for any sudden development. He did not have to wait long; there came an unexpected shift of the wind more to the southward just as the *Ajax* was slowly heaving about to go off on the other tack. It caught her all aback; the great sails clattered, and her headway stopped. She had missed stays.

It is no laughing matter for a big ship to have this happen to her when approaching a harbor or nearing shallow water. At once the boatswain's whistle began piping away; orders were shouted, and there was trouble below and aloft.

But what happened to the clumsily handled craft astern? She was immediately under the port gal-



"She came about like a peg-top."



"She came about like a peg-top."

leries, within half a cable's length, doddering along under foresail and mainsail. At the first sign of what had occurred to the battle-ship there ensued a transformation scene.

Have you ever seen an unwilling dog accompanying its master on a walk? how he sneaks close at the heels, watching his chance when the attention is not directed to him? How suddenly he turns tail, and after a few cautious movements that bring him beyond the reach of stick or arm, he breaks into a run at full speed, disdaining call or whistle, and puts back for home? That is exactly what the *Rattler* did. Scarcely had the canvas of the *Ajax* begun the ominous fluttering that showed the change of the wind's direction, than the privateer swung off to meet it.

Slowly at first and then with a rush she came about like a peg top. Without an order being given, out broke the great foresail, the topsails dropped from the gaskets and were sheeted home, and with a lurch to leeward the *Rattler* stretched out back over her course for the harbor entrance, setting her flying kites as she bowled along!

So busy was everybody on board the three-decker, who had troubles of her own to look after, that no one noticed the sudden manœuvre of the privateer; no one except one of the ladies who happened to be the wife of the Admiral, for the *Ajax* was a flag-

ship. She, after a minute, succeeded in attracting the attention of one of the lieutenants, who with the rest had gone forward to the break of the poop and was watching what was going on below and above him.

"The little ship," she inquired innocently, "where is she going?"

The officer turned and immediately had to beg the lady's pardon most abjectly, for he broke forth into an oath.

"Tricked, after all!" he exclaimed, grasping one of his companions by the arm and pointing.

But there was one other person who had noticed all these goings on. It was the prisoner on the lower spar-deck.

"You can soak me for a squilgee if that weren't neat," he chuckled, and then lifting his hands to his cheeks, he roared out something through the port.

The *Rattler's* Captain, who was at the wheel, had jumped as if the *Ajax* had suddenly whirled about and let fly a broadside at him, for he heard the words as plain as could be.

"Good-by, Captain Symington! Give my regards to all at home!"

He recognized his old friend Edgar's voice, and it gave him a thrill of pleasure to know that he was alive even if he was a prisoner.

The *Ajax* was still in stays; but her commander

found time to fire his battery of stern-chasers, the balls whistling harmlessly past the *Rattler's* stern, missing her widely. In reply to this Captain Symington again lifted his old beaver hat.

Far away to the leeward were the sails of the blockading squadron. Attracted by the firing of the *Ajax*, they flew their little flags and crowded on their canvas. But by this time the *Rattler* had doubled the point and was making out into the dancing waters of the Channel. And who was going to touch her where she had sea-room? As if anxious to have everything understood, Symington raised his ensign. The English captain, who had been forced to boxhaul his great vessel in order to avoid running on the shoals, cursed beneath his breath. One of the ladies turned to the Admiral's wife.

"I wonder why we did not start after her, Madame?" she asked.

"Oh, because we couldn't turn round quick enough, I suppose," she rejoined. Then turning to her spouse she asked:—

"Was not that it, Sir John?"

"Yes, my dear," responded the Admiral, grimly; "that was just it."

Down below, Captain Edgar had not yet recovered from his laughing fit; and when he and Captain Myron Symington met again, as they did many times afterwards, they used to laugh over it together.

THE NARRAGANSETT

THE NARRAGANSETT

"TWENTY of those confounded Yankees give me more trouble than three decks full of Frenchmen," remarked Captain Brower of the prison-ship *Spartan*, one of the fleet of dismantled battle-ships that thronged the harbor of Plymouth, England.

Lieutenant Barnard, commanding the neat little sloop of war *Sparrow*, then on the guard station, laughed.

"They are troublesome beggars, sure enough," he said; "but the funny thing is that they behave almost exactly the way our fellows do, or at least would under the same circumstances; that I verily believe."

"Well, such insolence and impudence I never saw in my life," returned Brower. "I shall be glad when I get rid of this last batch and will rest easy when they have been sent ashore to Dartmoor. You should have seen the way they behaved about two weeks ago. Let me see, it was the evening of the fourth, I believe. In fact the whole day through

they were at it — skylarking and speech-making and singing."

It was July, 1814. Many vessels in the government service of Great Britain, returning from America, or from the high seas, brought into Plymouth crews of American vessels, and not a few of the troops captured about the Lakes and on the Canadian frontier had been brought over also. They were usually kept on board one of the prison hulks for three or four months; sometimes it was a year or more before they were transferred to the military prisons, the largest of which was situated at Dartmoor, and the second in size at Stapleton, not far from the town of Gloucester. Although the prison-ships and the prisons themselves were crowded with Frenchmen, the Yankees were three or four times as much trouble to control and to command. When they were not planning to escape, they were generally bothering the sentinels, drawing up petitions, or having some row or other, if only for the fun of turning out the guard.

"I wish somebody else had this position," grumbled Captain Brower, pouring out a glass of port. "I don't think that I was made for it. When I am left alone, I am liable to become too lenient, and when I am angered, perhaps I may be too hasty. . . . At any rate, I wish some one else was here in my place. . . . I had to laugh the

other day, though; you know old Bagwigge of the *Germanicus*, here alongside, what a hot-tempered, testy old fellow he is? Well, the other day he was walking up and down his old quarter-deck, and about fourscore of my Yankee prisoners were up on deck for air and exercise. Suddenly they began singing. Now, I don't object to that; if they'd never do anything worse, I'd be happy. They've only cut four holes through different parts of this ship, and once well-nigh scuttled her; but never mind; to go on: Bagwigge, he walks to the side and shouts across to my vessel: 'Hi, there! you confounded Yankees! avast that everlasting row.' I didn't see that it was any of his business, as it was on my own ship; but the Yankees — I wish you had seen them, Barnard, upon my soul."

"What did they do? Slanged him, I suppose, terrible."

"Well, you see," continued Captain Brower, "the potatoes had just been given out for the use of the prison mess cooks, and three big baskets of them lay there on the deck. One of the Yankees threw a potato that caught old Captain B. fair and square on the side of his head, capsizing his hat and nearly fetching away his ear. 'You insolent villains!' he cried, almost jumping up on the rail, 'I'll make you sweat your blood for this.' Well, ha, ha, not only one potato was thrown this time, but about half a

bushel. I' faith, but those rascals were good shots. Old Bagwigge, he was raked fore and aft. Turning, he ran for it, and dove in the cabin."

The younger man laughed. The officer about whom the tale had been told was not popular in the service. He had had no Americans on board his prison hulk, and the Frenchmen who were temporarily his guests trembled at his frown and cringed at his gesture. He was an overbearing, hot-tempered martinet, and was hated accordingly. But this was not the end of Captain Brower's story, and as soon as the Lieutenant had stopped laughing, he resumed: —

"Let me go on, for I haven't finished yet. When Bagwigge returned, he had with him a file of marines. Up he marches 'em, and the Yankees greeted them with a cheer, and then seeing that the Captain was going to speak to them, they desisted to let him talk.

'Now,' he said, 'you impudent scoundrels, below with you; every mother's son of you, or I'll —' He hadn't got any farther than that when the same fellow who threw the first potato hit him again. He was only about forty feet away, you know, and with such force was the vegetable thrown that it nearly took his head off his shoulders. 'Fire!' he roared. 'Fire at them!' I doubt whether the marines could have taken aim, they were so busy dodging potatoes, and as for Bagwigge himself, he

was jumping, bubbling, and sizzling like a blob of butter in a skillet. I rushed forward and jumped on to the forecastle rail.

"'If you dare fire, Captain Bagwigge,' I cried, 'you'll swing for it!' At this, he dove down the companionway again, with his marines after him. I turned to the prisoners and ordered them below, where they went readily enough. As to Bagwigge, I don't suppose that I'll hear from him again; I hope that he will attend to his own vessel and leave mine alone."

All this conversation, or at least the relation of Captain Brower's story, had taken place in the *Spartan's* cabin, and when the two officers left, a detail of the prisoners was on the deck, walking briskly back and forth under the eyes of armed sentries, who guarded the gangways and patrolled narrow board walks, raised some two or three feet above the hammock-nettings.

"Do you see that tall, brown fellow, there?" asked Captain Brower, pointing. "He is the one who did such sharp shooting with the potatoes."

"A strange-looking creature, surely," responded the Commander of the *Sparrow*. "He looks a half-tamed man. Well, I wish you less trouble and all success. Good day to you; I have to return to my ship."

Brower turned and went back into his cabin.

Although he did not know it, and would have denied it if he had been told the truth, he was exactly the man for the position, for he was just and painstaking, humane and careful. Although there had been all sorts of attempts to escape formulated among the Yankees, and almost carried into successful execution, Brower had not lost a single prisoner, and his presence among them could restore order and quell a disturbance better than the parading of a file of soldiers.

They were a strange lot, these captives. They came from all walks of life, and from every sort of place. Raw militiamen, who had been surrendered by Hull (the army Hull, mark you, not the brave Commodore), privateersmen, captured in all sorts of crafts and dressed in all fashions, but now principally in rags, and men-of-warsmen who had given themselves up while serving on board English ships rather than fight against their country. These last held themselves rather aloof from the others and messed by themselves. Poor devils, they had never had the satisfaction, even, of having struck a blow. They had turned from one kind of slavery to another; that was all.

The tall, odd-looking figure that Captain Brower had pointed out, belonged to the wildest mess on the orlop deck. His appearance might, perhaps, be called startling; he was far from ill-looking, with

straight aquiline features, deep-set and quick black eyes that could laugh or look cruel almost at the same moment. His teeth were beautifully white and even, and although he was not heavy or compact looking, he was as strong almost as any two other men on board the ship. He spoke English without an accent, but with an odd form and phrasing that would have attracted attention to him anywhere. His clear skin was the color of new copper sheathing, and his straight black hair that was gathered sailor fashion into a queue was as coarse as a horse's mane. The grandson of a chief he was, a descendant of the line of kings that had ruled the Narragansett tribes — a full-blooded Indian. But he rejoiced in no fine name. A sailor before the mast he had been since his sixteenth year, and he had appeared on the books of the privateer brig *Teaser* as John Vance, A.B. It is a wrong supposition that an Indian will never laugh or that he is not a fun-maker. John Vance was constantly skylarking, and he was a leader in that, as he was in almost all the games of skill or strength. Every one liked him, and to a certain extent he was feared, for a tale was told in which John and a knife figured extensively. The flash that would come into his eye gave warning often when the danger limit was being approached, yet he was popular, and even the detested marine guard treated

him with some deference. In the last attempt to escape, the Narragansett had been captured after he had swum half-way to the shore and had dived more than twenty times to escape musket-balls from the guard-ships. Suddenly the order came "Prisoners below" — and the ship-bell struck eight sonorous strokes. As the last four or five men left the deck, the Indian touched one of them upon the shoulder.

"Watch me," he said, "and say nothing."

There was a narrow door in a bulkhead close to the companionway, but out of reach unless there was something like a box or barrel on which to stand. It was closed by a padlock thrust through two iron staples. As John descended, he caught the combing of the hatch and drew himself up to a level with his chin. Holding himself there with one arm, he reached forward and caught the padlock in his brown, sinewy fingers. Slowly he turned his hand. The iron bent and gave a little. A grin crossed his face. Swinging himself forward, he landed on a man's shoulders beneath him, and with a wild warwhoop he tumbled a half-dozen down the rest of the ladder, and they sprawled in a heap on the deck. Disdaining to notice the half-humorous curses, he sprang to his feet. Three other men who belonged to his mess followed him.

"Can you do it, Red?" asked one.

"Yes, surely," John replied. "So I can to-night."

The whole of the gun-deck forward of the forecastle hatch had been divided, by a strong partition, into a sort of storeroom. There was one entrance into it from above from the topgallant forecastle, where part of the marine guard were stationed, and the other opening onto the hatchway, to be used in case of emergency.

It was just past the midnight watch when four stealthy figures crept out from the shadows into the light of the dingy lantern that hung at the foot of the companionway. At night there was only one sentry stationed there, and he generally sat halfway up the ladder, and it was impossible for the prisoners to tell without crossing the dead-line that was drawn at night whether he was asleep or not. This was the risk that had to be undertaken; for if the man should see any one pass beneath that old rope that was drawn across the deck, he would have a right to fire. If the fellow was asleep, yet to gain the deck above, the venturesome prisoner would have to pass within arm's length of him.

Perhaps John Vance had inherited from his long line of red ancestors the peculiar knack of moving without sound, the art of crawling on his belly like a snake, perhaps he had a acquired it by constant practice since he had been a prisoner. For it was his boast, and one that had been proved to be true, that contrary to rules he had visited every part of

the ship, and after hours; as has been told, he had been retaken a number of times when just on the point of making good his escape.

The three seamen who accompanied him on this occasion could see the legs of the sentry from the knee down, as he sat on the steps of the ladder leading to the berth-deck above. They could also see the butt of his musket as it rested beside him. Vance had disappeared in the black shadow that lay along the starboard side, and now the watchers saw a curious thing take place. The sentry's musket suddenly tilted forward, as if of its own volition, and then disappeared backward into the darkness, without a sound, much in the manner of a vanishing slide in a magic lantern. The man's legs did not move.

"He is asleep," whispered Ned Thornton to Bill Pratt.

"He's asleep," reiterated Bill Pratt to Gabe Sackett, who made the fourth one of the "constant plotters," as they were termed by the other prisoners.

But in one minute that sentry was seen to be very wide awake indeed. That is, if movement signified wakefulness. His legs shot out in two vicious and sudden kicks. A hand, with wide-spread, reaching fingers, stretched out as if searching for the missing musket. The man wriggled from one side to another and floundered helplessly, with his body half-

way off the edge of the ladder. But not one sound did he utter!

"Red's got hold of him," croaked Thornton, and with the assurance of hunters who had watched their quarry step into the trap that held him fast, they stepped forward without fear or caution.

It was as Thornton had said. The poor sentry's head was wedged against the steps. Around his throat were clasped the fingers of two sinewy, bronze-colored hands that held the victim as closely and in as deadly a clasp as might the strap of the Spanish garrote. The scene was really horrible. Sackett leaned about the edge of the ladder, and then he saw what a wonderful thing the Narragansett had done. The combing of the hatchway was fully six feet from where the sentry sat. Below yawned the black abyss into the mid-hold. Across this Vance had been forced to lean, balancing himself with one hand when he relieved the sentry of his musket, and then springing forward he had caught him from behind, about the throat. There the Indian hung as a man might hang over the mouth of a well. No wonder the unfortunate marine had been unable to cry out!

"Let go of him, Red," whispered Gabe. "You've choked him enough." The Indian stretched out one of his feet and hooked it over the hatch combing. With a supple movement and without a stum-

ble, he stood erect upon the deck. The sentry would have plunged over into the hold, had not the two others grasped him firmly by the shoulders. They carried him to one side and laid him in the deep shadow against a bulkhead. He was breathing, but insensible.

The rest of the escape can be told in a few words: The lock of the door leading into the storeroom was wrenched away, and noiselessly the four entered, closing it behind them. They had been just in time, for they could hear, on the deck above, the new watch coming on. A port on one side of the storeroom was guarded by three flimsy iron bars. There was enough light outside from the young moon to show the direction of the opening.

Vance bent the irons double at the first attempt. They were almost twenty feet above the water, for the old hulk floated high. But everything seemed working for the furtherance of their plan. There was a new coil of rope on the deck, and looking out of the port right beneath them, they could see a ship's dingy with the oars in it. Sackett slid down first; the other two followed, and Vance remained until the last. No sooner had he made the boat in safety than a great hubbub and confusion sounded through the ship. There came a sharp blare of a bugle, the rolling of the alarm drum, and they could hear the slamming of the heavy hatches that

prevented communication from one part of the vessel to the other. The prisoners, cooped up below, knew what it all meant. Some one was out, and there in the pitch darkness they fell to cheering.

But to return to the "constant plotters," in the dingy: they had made but a dozen boat's-lengths when they were discovered, for there was light enough to see objects a long distance across the water. There came a quick hail, followed by a spurt of flame.

"Lord!" Pratt, who was pulling stroke oar with Sackett alongside of him, groaned; "I caught that in the shoulder." One of his arms drooped helplessly, but he continued rowing with the other.

"Let go," grunted Sackett; "I can work it alone — lie down in the stern sheets."

There were three or four vessels, mostly prison or sheer hulks, to be passed before they gained the shore. From each one there came a volley. Poor Sackett received a ball through his lungs and fell into the bottom of the boat, bleeding badly. And now the boats were after them!

Vance and Thornton pulled lustily at the oars; but the others gained a foot in every four. The dingy was splintered by the hail of musket-balls. One of the prison hulks — the last they had to pass — let go a carronade loaded with grape. It awoke the echoes of the old town. So close was the

charge delivered that it had hardly time to scatter, and churned the water into foam just astern of the little boat as if some one had dumped a bushel of gravel stones into the waters of the harbor. Not three hundred feet ahead of the foremost pursuing boat, the dingy's keel grated on the shingle.

The Narragansett sprang out, Thornton after him. Sackett could not be raised. Pratt, holding his wounded and disabled arm, staggered up the incline towards some stone steps leading to the roadway above. But he had hardly reached the foot when there came another shot. He fell face downward and made no attempt to rise. Sackett and he would join in no more plots; but Vance and Thornton were now running down a side street.

They dodged about a corner into an alley; crossed a small common, and just as they reached the other side they ran, bows on, into a heavy cloaked figure, who, seeing their haste, hailed them peremptorily, and sprang a huge rattle, making much the same noise that a small boy does when he runs down a picket fence with a stick. Thornton was laboring ahead like a wherry in a tideway. But the Indian was striding along like a racehorse, with the easy, springing gait inherited from his own father, "Chief Fleetfoot," who, if the story told be true, could run down a red deer in the woods. He turned to assist his comrade by taking hold of him

and giving him a tow. But as he did so, Thornton's foot struck a round stone and he fell forward, and lay there groaning.

"Run on, Red! run on!" he cried breathlessly. "I've broken a leg; something's carried away in my pins; on with you!"

"Come you with me too," answered the Narragansett, pulling Thornton to his feet with one hand; but the poor lad groaned and fell again.

"Run ahead, curse you!" he said. "Don't stay here and be taken!"

The watchman's rattle had attracted the notice of the people in the houses. Windows were opened and heads were thrust forth, and from about a corner came another cloaked figure carrying a lantern, and a big pike was in his hand.

There was nothing else to do, and, obeying Thornton's angry order, the Indian struck out again into his long distance-covering gait. Which way he ran it made little matter to him. He did not know the country; he had no plans; but the feel of the springy earth beneath his feet was good to him. The sight of the stars shining through the branches of the trees overhead — for he had soon reached the open country and left the town behind him — made him breathe the air in long, deep breaths, and tempted him to shout. It was freedom; liberty! The dim moonlight softened everything, and to his

mind he seemed to be flying. He passed by great stone archways leading to private parks and great estates. Twice he had avoided little hamlets of thatched cottages. Once he had run full speed through the streets of a little village, and had been hailed by the watchman, who sprang his harmless rattle. But it was growing light. He must find some place to hide, for travel during the daytime he knew he could not. Leaping a fence, he made his way into an adjoining field and lay down, panting, beneath some bushes.

Soon cocks began to crow; daylight widened; a bell in an ivy-covered tower tolled musically. Insects commenced their morning hum; birds twittered, and people moved out to their toil. From his hiding-place the Narragansett watched the unusual sight. In a field below him — for he lay at the top of a small hill — he could see some men and women working in a field of grain. One of the girls had placed a basket beneath the shade of a bush. The Indian was hungry. It required little trouble to snake himself through the grass and secure the contents of the little hamper, a loaf of bread and a large piece of cheese. Then he carefully replaced the cover and stole back to his former hiding-place. Soon he observed, in the road below him, a man riding along at a fast gait; he pulled in his horse and shouted something to the workers in

the field. This done, he rode at top speed into the village. Very soon another horseman appeared, and soon quite a little band of them, among whom was a mounted soldier or two, and three or four in the pink coats of the hunting-field.

But near footsteps sounded. A man in leather gaiters, with a fowling-piece over his shoulder, was coming down a little path from some deep woods on the right. A setter dog played in front of him. The man was reading a freshly printed notice. The ink was smeared from handling. The man spelled it out aloud. "Escaped from the hulks; a dangerous prisoner; a wild American Indian; ten pounds reward," and much more of it.

All of a sudden the dog stopped; then with a short bark, he sprang forward. At the same instant the gamekeeper dropped the printed notice that had been handed to him but a minute previously by a horseman on the road. Surely he could not be mistaken, something had dodged down behind yonder hedge; and as the setter sprang forward, barking viciously, a strange figure arose, a man with a copper-colored face, and streaming, unkempt, black locks; he wore big gold ear-rings, and he was clad in a torn canvas shirt and trousers, with a sailor's neckerchief around his throat. The dog was bounding forward when suddenly the figure raised its arm. No cricketer that ever played on

the village green could throw with such unerring force. A large stone struck the dog and took the fight out of him. Yelping, he sneaked back to his master's heels. The startled gamekeeper raised his gun and fired. Whether it was because of his sudden fright or the quickness with which the agile figure dropped at the flash, the charge whistled harmlessly through the leaves. But the sound of the shot had attracted the attention of the people in the fields. A cry arose, as a weird figure broke from the bushes and dashed down the hill, making for the woods.

"Gone away! gone away! whoop, hi!" — the view hallo of the huntsman.

A man in a red coat had sighted the chase. He leaped a fence, and four or five other horsemen followed. Soon there came the shrill yelping of the dogs as they found the plain trail of the barefoot man running for his life.

It was a great run, that man-hunt, and one remembered to this day. Over fence and hedge, across ditch and stream, the Narragansett led them. No trained hurdler that ever ran across country in the county of Devonshire could have held the pace that Vance kept up. Twice he threw them off the scent by running up a stream and doubling on his tracks. But the whole countryside was out and after him. The dogs were gaining on him swiftly,



"Over fence and hedge."



and at last at the foot of a great oak they had him cornered. He fought them off with a broken branch, and soon the pack surrounded him in a yelping circle, not daring to come nearer.

Up came the huntsmen. They halted at some distance and talked among themselves. Who among them was brave enough to go up and lay hold of this strange wild man? They called off the dogs and waited for the soldiers. Eight or ten yokels and some farmer folks joined the gaping crowd. Five men appeared with muskets, and one with a long coil of rope. But all this time the Narragansett had stood there with his back against an oak tree, with a sneer on his thin lips. They talked aloud as to how they should capture him. Some were for shooting him down at once; but as yet no one had addressed a word to him direct. Surely, he must speak an outlandish foreign tongue! Suddenly, the fugitive took a step forward and raised his hand.

"Englishmen," he said, "listen to me."

All started back in astonishment. Why, this wild man spoke their own language!

"Who is the chief here? Who is the captain?" Every one looked at a middle-aged man astride a sturdy brown cob. He was the Squire, and magistrate of the neighborhood.

"Well, upon my soul," he began, "I suppose —"

But the Narragansett interrupted him. "To you I give myself," he said, advancing. He glanced at the others with supreme contempt. As he came forward, he held out his hand, and involuntarily the man on horseback stretched forth his. It was a strange sight, that greeting. The crowd gave way a little, and three or four mounted dragoons came tearing up hill. They stopped in astonishment.

"You gave us a good run," said the Squire, with some embarrassment, not knowing what to say.

"You are too many; I am your prisoner," was the answer.

No one laid hands on him. Walking beside the Squire's horse down to the road, followed by the gaping, gabbling crowd, who still, however, kept aloof, the Narragansett walked proudly erect. When he reached the highway, he turned. There was a cart standing there. The Squire dismounted from his horse and spoke a few words to the driver. Then he mounted to the seat. John Vance sprang up beside him. At a brisk pace they started down the road towards Portsmouth, the soldiers and the horsemen trailing on behind them. At the landing where the boat from the old *Spartan* met them — for a horseman had ridden on with the news — was waiting a sergeant of marines. He advanced with a pair of handcuffs.

"None of that!" exclaimed the Squire. "This man has given me his word."

"The word of a chief's son," put in the Narragansett. The two men shook hands again; then proudly John Vance stepped into the boat, and unmanacled sat there in the stern sheets.

In twenty minutes he was once more down in the close, foul-smelling 'tween decks.

The only notice taken of the Narragansett's break for liberty was the fact that he was numbered among the next detail bound for Dartmoor; but the tradition of the man-hunt of Squire Knowlton's hounds, and its curious ending, lives in Devonshire to-day.

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FIGHTING STEWART



FIGHTING STEWART

AN old sailor sat on the *Constitution's* forecastle, with his back against the carriage of one of the forward carronades. He was skilfully unwinding a skein of spun yarn which he held over his two bare feet, while at the same time he rolled the ball deftly with his stubby, jointless fingers. A young boy, not over fourteen years of age, lay sprawled flat on the deck beside him, his chin supported in the hollows of his two hands, his elbows on the deck.

"It comes all along o' drinkin' rum, says I," went on the old sailor, continuing some tale he had been telling. "That, I claims, is the reason for many unfortunate doin's; and that is why all them men I was tellin' you about was eat by the cannibals."

"I don't see as it made any difference," broke in the boy, "except perhaps in the taste. If they were bent on going where they did, they'd have been eaten anyhow, wouldn't they?"

"As to that," returned the old sailor, "I contradict ye. Rum sometimes makes a fellow want to

fight when it's a tarnel sight braver to run; that is, upon some occashuns."

"Some folks get so they can't even wiggle, let alone run," observed the boy. "I saw our bo'sun —"

"Don't speak uncharitable of your neighbors, son," observed the old man. "All I can say is that I don't take no stock in grog; thereby being' the peculiarest man in the service, I dessay. I've seen lessons, as I was tellin' ye. You see, all those friends of mine would been livin' to-day if they hadn't taken on cargoes of that thar African wine. Yes, they got to suppose that they could lick about twenty times their weight of black niggers, and so they started in, and never come back. But I, not drinkin' nothin', jes' kep' by the boat, an' when them savages come after me, I warn't there. Had a terrible time gettin' off to the ship all alone; but I done it, an' thar's the best temperance lecture I know of. I got a hull lot of texts out of the Good Book; but most people won't listen to 'em; leastways on board of this ship."

"I reckon you are the only man what don't take his grog here," said the boy.

"That I be," returned the old sailor, "and, by Sal, I'm proud of it! 'No, thankee, messmate,' says I when it comes around, 'I don't need that to keep my chronometer goin'.' Then they all laughs

generally, and calls me a fresh-water moss-back. Some day 'an I'll git even with 'em."

Old Renwick, although somewhat of a butt of the crew, was respected nevertheless because of his being a good seaman, and because he also had made a record for himself in the old days during the war with France and the adventurous times with Preble in the Mediterranean. He was a great favorite with Captain Stewart, then the Commander of the old frigate, and by him he had been promoted to the position of quartermaster. He would never have succeeded in qualifying for the position of boatswain or for any higher grade than that which he now held, for the simple reason that the old fellow was too lenient in his discipline and too ready to condole with the faults of others except where rum was concerned.

It was Renwick's greatest delight to secure a solitary and attentive listener and spin a long yarn to him. He spoke without the usual profane punctuation, — the habit of most seamen, — and when off watch he read his Bible most assiduously. He had had many adventures in his forty-four years at sea, and his memory being a most retentive one, it required little excuse for him to start on a long mental peregrination through the laden fields of his memory.

Many were the occasions when the boy found

time to become Renwick's solitary auditor. The lad was bright, and this was but his second voyage at sea. He was one of those children who, although born inland and away from the smell of the ocean, still must inherit from their ancestors the keen desire to seek adventures and see strange countries —he dreamed of ships and the deep. Once firmly rooted, this feeling never dies; despite hardships, wrecks, and disasters, the sailor returns to his calling.

The boy had never seen an action. But he had rejoiced with the rest at America's many victories; he had joined with the crowd that had followed the parading sailors in New York after Hull's great victory, and he had peeped in at the window of the hotel upon the occasion of the dinner given to Decatur and to Bainbridge and to the *Guerrière's* conqueror — all this while on a visit to the city from his home in the mountains of New Jersey. And thus inflamed with the idea, he had run away to sea, and had made his first voyage, eight or ten months previous to the opening of the story, in a little privateer that had an uneventful cruise and returned to port after taking two small prizes that had offered no resistance. His entering on board the *Constitution* had been with the permission of his parents, who saw that the only way to hold him from following his bent would be to keep him at home forever under their watchful eyes.

A great war-ship is a small floating world, and, like the world, the dangers that beset a young man starting alone on his career are many. There are the good and the bad, the leaders and the led; the people who lift up others, and those who lean. It was rather well for the boy that he had met with old Renwick and conceived a friendship for him. From the old sailor the lad had learned much. He was an expert at tying knots already, and he had learned to hand, reef, and steer after a fashion on board the privateer schooner. The royal yards on a man-of-war are always manned by boys, because of their agility and lightness. This boy was a born topman; he exulted in the sense of freedom that comes to one when laying out upon a swaying yard; the bounding exhilaration of the heart, the exciting quickening of the pulse as the great mass describes arcs of huge circles as the vessel far below swings and rises through the seas.

The attention of the officers had been called to him more than once, and if there was a ticklish job aloft above the cross-trees, the boy was sent to perform it. On one occasion he had excited a reprimand for riding down a backstay head foremost, the First Lieutenant observing, and speaking to him thus: "While that would do for a circus, it wasn't the thing for shipboard." But he was a perfect monkey with the ropes, and nothing de-

lighted him better than scampering up the shrouds, or shinning to the main truck to disengage the pennant halliards. He used to sing, in his shrill, high voice, even when struggling to get in the stiffened canvas in a gale.

On the 20th of February (the year was 1815) the First Lieutenant made the early morning inspection of the ship. He had hoped that the clouds and thickness that had prevailed for a few days would disappear, for it seemed as if for once "Old Ironsides" was pursued by the demon of bad luck in the way of weather. At one P.M., after a fruitless attempt to catch a glimpse of the sun for a noonday sight, the clouds broke away and the breeze freshened. The boy and his companions jumped at the orders to "shorten sail and take in the royals." Quickly they climbed the shrouds, passed one great yard after another in their upward journey, and came at last to the royals. The boy was first. He looked down at the narrow deck below him, and at the curved surfaces of the billowing sails. It seemed as if his weight alone would suffice to overturn the vessel. The lightness and delicacy of the entire fabric were never so apparent to him. He could see his companions crawling up, their faces lifted, and panting from their exertions. The sunlight cast dark blue shadows on the sails below. Two great ridges of foam stretched out

from the *Constitution's* bows. The taut sheets had begun to hum under the stress of the increasing breeze. The boy began to chant his strange song —a song of pure exhilaration.

With so many light kites flying, something might carry away at any moment, however, and he heard the officer of the deck shout up for them to hasten. Then he let his eyes rove toward the horizon line as he took his position in the bunt.

Far away against the sky where the clouds shut down upon the water, he saw a speck of white! Leaning back from the yard, he drew a long breath; those on deck stopped their work for an instant, the officer took a step sideways in order the better to see the masthead.

"Sail ho!" clear and distant had come down from the royal yard.

"Where away?" called the officer, making a trumpet of his hands.

"Two points off the larboard bow, sir," was the reply.

"Clew up and clew down," was now the order. The steersman climbed the wheel, and with a great bone in her teeth the *Constitution* hauled her wind and made sail in chase of the distant stranger. In a quarter of an hour she was made out to be a ship, and then came the cry a second time: "Sail ho!" There was another vessel ahead of the first! A

half an hour more, and both were discovered to be ships standing close-hauled, with their starboard tacks on board. At eight bells in the afternoon they were in plain sight from the deck, little signal flags creeping up and down their halliards — ship fashion, they were holding consultation. Then the weathermost bore up for her consort, who was about ten miles distant and to leeward; and crowding on everything she could carry again, the *Constitution* boiled along after her. The lower, topmast, topgallant, and royal studding-sails were thrown out, and hand over hand she overhauled them.

The boy was aloft again. He had caught the fever of excitement that even the old hands felt, as they saw that the magazine was open and that powder and shot were being dealt out for the divisions. The half-ports to leeward had to be kept closed to prevent the water from flooding the decks.

The boy stayed after the other youngsters had descended. He could feel the royal mast swaying and whipping like a fishing-rod — the stays were as tight as the strings of a fiddle. They felt like iron to the grasp; they had narrowed under the tension. The wind in the deep sails below played a sonorous bass to the high treble of their singing. The ship was murmuring like a hive, now and then creaking as she lurched under the pressure.

How it happened the boy never knew; but as suddenly as winking there came a report as of a cannon aloft; the main royal, upon the yard of which he was leaning, flew off, and caught by the tacks and sheets, fell down across the yard below. The main-topgallant mast had been carried clean away. No one, not even the boy himself, knew how it all occurred. Perhaps he had laid hold of one of the reef points. Perhaps he had made a lucky jump. But there he lay in the bight made by the folds of the royal, softly resting against the bosom of the sail below, unhurt, but slightly dizzy. From the hamper of wreckage above hung one of the loosened clew-lines. The end of it reached down to the cross-trees. Reaching forth, the young topman tested it, and seeing it would hold, emerged from his hanging nest, and swinging free for an instant, managed with his monkey-like powers to lay hold of a stay and reach the shrouds. There was a cheer from below, as he sprang to the deck, and this time there was no reprimand.

The loss of her upper sails appeared to impede the speed of the frigate but little. It would not be long now before the bow-chasers might be expected to begin. The men were mustered on the deck. Along came the stewards and the mess-men with the customary grog.

The officers all this time had been busy survey-

ing the two ships. An hour ago they had been pronounced to be English.

Old Renwick grumbled as he watched the men pour down the half pannikin of scalding liquor.

"Well, here's to us," chuckled a tall, red-nosed sailor, emptying the stuff down his throat as if it had been spring water. "Here's to us, and every stick in the old ship."

"We ought to get double allowance," put in another man just before it was his turn to take his portion. "There are two of 'em to fight, which makes me twice as thirsty. Here's to the best thing in the world, — grog."

Quartermaster Renwick did not like to hear all this, and overcome by a sudden impulse, he stepped out from behind the bitts. There were two buckets full of the strong-smelling drink resting on the deck. With a sweep of his foot he upset them both! A howl of rage went up from all sides. One of the men loosened a belaying-pin and advanced threateningly. The old sailor stood his ground.

"Avast this 'ere swillin', lads," he said; "there shall be no Dutch courage on board this ship." He folded his arms and stood looking at the angry crowd. The First Lieutenant had observed the whole occurrence, and immediately gave the order to beat to quarters. The boy, thinking that his old friend was about to be attacked, had jumped to

his side. But his station in action was on the forecastle, where he was powder-monkey for the two forward guns.

The call to quarters and the rolling of the drum had stopped any trouble that might have arisen owing to the quartermaster's sudden action, but the men were surly, and it would have been hard for him if they could have reached him unseen.

Every second now brought the *Constitution* closer to the enemy. Never could the boy forget his sensations as he saw the gunners bend down and aim the forward gun on the larboard bow. The smoke from the shot blew back through the port. The gun next to it now spoke, but both balls fell short, and neither of the ships replied.

They were both ably handled, and their commanders had now reached some understanding as to the conduct of the action; for when the *Constitution* was yet a mile's distance from them they passed near enough to one another to speak through the trumpet.

The beginning of an action at sea, before the blood is heated by the sight of carnage and the ear accustomed to the strange sounds and the indifference to danger has grown over the consciousness of self, is the most exciting moment. There is a sense of unreality in the appearance of the enemy. If he is coming bravely up to fight, there is no hatred felt for him. Men grow intensely critical at such mo-

ments, strange to say. They admire their opponent's skill, although they are inclined to smile exultantly if they perceive he is making missteps. Captain Stewart and his officers, grouped at the side, were discussing calmly the probable designs of the enemy.

"Egad! They are hauling by the wind, and they are going to wait for us," said Stewart.

"They are not going to run, at any event," observed the First Lieutenant. "They are tidy-looking sloops of war, sir!"

In five minutes both the English vessels had made all sail, close-hauled by the wind, with the plain intention of trying to outpoint the frigate.

"No, you don't, my friends," remarked Stewart to himself. "Not if I know my ship."

The crew, who were watching the oncomers, shared his sentiment, for they knew that the *Constitution* was not to be beaten on that point of sailing; and the strangers soon noticed this, also, for they shortened sail and formed on a line at about half a cable's length apart. Not a shot had been fired since the two bow guns had given challenge, but now the time had come, the huge flag of the *Constitution* went up to the peak, and in answer both ships hoisted English ensigns. Scarce three hundred yards now separated the antagonists. The English ships had started cheering. It was the usual custom of the Anglo-

Saxon to go into battle that way. Quartermaster Renwick called for three cheers from the *Constitution's* men, but they had not forgotten, at least some of them, his upsetting of the grog. His unpopularity at that present moment was evident, for few answered the call, and thus silently the men at the guns waited for the word to fire.

The boy was half-way down the companion ladder when it came. There was a great jar the whole vessel's length. A deafening explosion, and the fight was on!

For fifteen minutes it was hammer and tongs. Broadside after broadside was exchanged, and then it was noticed that the English had begun to slacken their return; and now they suddenly were silent. A strange phenomenon here took place. As all the combatants were close-hauled and the wind was light, a great bank of opaque sulphurous smoke had gathered all about them. The *Constitution* ceased firing, also; for although the enemy was within two hundred yards' distance, not a sight of either ship could be seen. They were blotted out; their condition and their exact positions were unknown. Not a gun was fired for three minutes, and then the smoke cleared away.

"Here they are!" cried Stewart, and his exclamation was drowned with a broadside, for the gunners of the *Constitution* had discovered that the headmost

ship was just abreast of them and but a hundred feet away. The sternmost was luffing up with the intention of reaching the *Constitution's* quarter. The smoke from the big guns had hidden everything again, but orders were now coming fast from the quarter-deck. Men were hastening aloft, and others were tailing on to the braces, tacks, and sheets. The main and mizzen top-sails were braced aback against the mast, and slowly the *Constitution* began to move stern foremost through the water. It was as if nowadays the order had come to reverse the engines at full speed. All the sailors saw the importance of this act. They were cheering now, and they had good right to do so. Instead of finding herself on the larboard side and in good position for raking, the English vessel was in a very bad position. It must have astonished her commander to find himself so unexpectedly confronted, but he was directly beneath the *Constitution's* guns again. There was no help for it. He was forced to receive her fire. The big sloop of war, which had been deserted so unceremoniously, kept on making a great hubbub, aiming at the place where she supposed the Yankee frigate yet to be.

To repeat all the details of the rest of the struggle would be but to recount a tale filled with the detailed working of a ship and nautical expressions, but it is safe to state that never was a vessel better

handled, and never did a captain win a title more honestly than did Charles Stewart the sobriquet of "Fighting Stewart."

It was ten minutes of seven in the evening when the first English vessel struck her flag. She proved to be His Britannic Majesty's sloop of war *Cyane*, under the command of Captain Gordon Falcon, a gallant officer, and one who had earned distinction in the service. His ship, that he had fought bravely, mounted thirty-four guns. He was so overcome with emotion at having to surrender, that he could scarcely return Captain Stewart's greeting when he came on board, for he had entered the fight declaring that he was going to receive the Yankee's sword. As soon as he had placed a prize crew on board the *Cyane*, Stewart headed the *Constitution* for the other sloop of war, who was doing her best to get away. So fast did he overhaul her that the *Levant* — for that was her name — turned back to meet her big opponent, and bravely prepared to fight it out. But it was no use, and after some firing and manœuvring Captain George Douglass struck his colors, as his friend Falcon had been forced to do some time earlier.

But what of old Renwick and the boy? They lay below in the cockpit — the old man with a shattered leg and the hero of the royal yard with a bad splinter wound across his chest. Men forget

their wounds in moments of great mental excitement; since he had been brought below, the quartermaster had been following every movement of the ship as if he had been on deck.

"We are luffing up," he would say. "Ah! there we go, we headed her that time! By tar, my hearties, we will win the day! Hark to 'em! Hear 'em bark!" And so he kept it up, regardless of the fact that his shattered leg was soon to be taken off; and all of the thirteen wounded men there under the surgeon's care listened to him, and when the news came down that the first vessel had struck, Renwick called for cheers, and they were given this time with a will!

Three or four days after the fight, Captain Stewart was dining in his cabin, and as usual his guests were the English captains, who had not yet entirely recovered from the deep chagrin incident to their surrender. How it started, no one exactly knew. It is not on record which of the gentlemen was at fault for the beginning of the quarrel, but they were fighting their battles over again in a discussion that grew more heated every moment. Suddenly one of the officers, jumping to his feet, accused the other of being responsible for what he termed "the unfortunate conclusion of the whole affair." Hot words were exchanged. Stewart, who, of course, had his own opinions on the matter in question, said noth-



"A discussion that grew more heated every moment."

ing, until at last he perceived that things might be going too far, and it was time for him to interfere. Smiling blandly, and looking from one of the angry men to the other, he spoke as follows: —

"Gentlemen, there is only one way that I see, to decide this question,— to put you both on your ships again, give you back your crews, and try it over."

This ended the argument, but the story went the rounds of the ship, and one of the lieutenants in writing to a brother officer described the incident in those exact words.

Quartermaster Renwick survived the loss of his leg, and he used to relate the story of how and where he lost it to the youngsters who would gather about his favorite bench fronting the Battery sea-wall.

The boy recovered also, and he served his country until they laid him on the shelf after the Civil War was over. Very nearly forty years had he passed in the navy, where he grew to be a great hand at yarn-spinning, and was much quoted, for he linked the service back to the days of wind and sail, although he had lived to see the era of steam and steel. His favorite story of them all was of the old *Constitution* and how she behaved under the command of "Fighting Stewart."

TWO DUELS



TWO DUELS

"OH, Bainbridge, you're going ashore with us, aren't you?"

At these words a young man who was walking up and down the frigate's quarter-deck turned quickly. He was dressed in the same uniform as the one who had just asked the question, — that of a midshipman of the American navy.

"Not if you are starting at once, Raymond," he replied. "I won't be off duty for a quarter of an hour. Is the boat ready?"

"Not yet — maybe you will have time — have you asked for leave?"

"I have that right enough, but I can't be in two places at once. I'd like to go, though, if I could."

"It's too bad; all the fellows were counting on your coming." And Midshipman Raymond left the quarter-deck, and strolled forward to the mast, where five or six other middies were waiting, all dressed in their best uniforms, with rows of polished brass buttons, and neat little dirks swung at their left hips by slender chains. They were impatient

at the delay. Every one wished to be ashore, as it was the intention to dine together and afterwards to attend a concert at the Malta Theatre; for the *Constitution* was lying at anchor just off the town, and not far from the walls of the heavy fortifications that make the island England's greatest stronghold in the Eastern Mediterranean — second in importance among her possessions only to the impregnable Gibraltar.

"I hear Carlotti is going to sing to-night," observed one of the midshipmen knowingly, interrupting the chorus of grumblings at the slowness of the shore boat in returning. "She's great," he added.

"How do you know?" asked a short tow-headed reefer; "you never heard her."

"No, but Bainbridge has, and he told me."

"Wish Bainbridge was going with us —"

"So do we all," was the chorus to this, and just at this moment the ship's bell clanged the hour, and the one to whom they referred ran past them. He paused at the head of the ladder.

"I'll be up in a minute; don't you fellows go without me."

With these words he jumped below, and running into the steerage, he slammed open the lid of his chest and shifted into his best uniform in "presto change" fashion. He was just in time to hasten down the ladder and leap into the boat as she shoved off from

the side. There were two lieutenants going ashore, and they don't wait for tardy midshipmen.

"Quick work, Joseph," said Middy Raymond, laying his hand on Bainbridge's knee.

"Rather," was the panted reply. "Do I look shipshape? Feels as if I'd forgotten something."

"All ataunto — far as I can see."

Joseph Bainbridge was a younger brother of Commodore William Bainbridge, and like him he had gifts of popularity. He possessed a magnetic personality that attracted to him the notice of both officers and men, and a bold, adventurous spirit that won their admiration. Added to this was the fact that he was tall and strong, and conceded to be the handsomest young officer in the service.

When the boat drew up at the pier, the middies flocked off by themselves, and the two young lieutenants fell behind.

"You didn't hear the lecture, — the lecture the old man gave us while you were below, Bainbridge," said Midshipman Raymond. "Phew! but he piled it on thick in telling us how to behave ourselves. Any one might think that we were going ashore to offer challenges right and left to all the British army."

"What do you mean?" asked Bainbridge, slipping his arm through his friend's, and looking down at him, for he stood head and shoulders above the other youngsters.

"Why, just this," was the response. "The old man" (in this manner was the Commodore referred to) "says that there are plenty of fire-eating, snap-shooting 'eight-paces' chaps, just longing for a chance to pick a quarrel with a Yankee officer; and as he told us it took two to make trouble, he said he would hold us responsible if there was any row. We will have to mind our tacks and sheets. He expects us to be blind to all ugly looks, and deaf to all remarks, I suppose. Besides, we are all under promise to return by the last boat, that leaves at eleven o'clock."

"Well," observed the tall midshipman, laughing, "there seems to be no great hardship in that; we have some hours before us. Let's turn in here and get our grub — then, ho for the theatre!"

The crowd of laughing young fellows entered a café, and seated themselves quietly at a corner table. But their entrance had been observed. A group of officers, in scarlet coats and gilt braid and shoulder knots, gazed insolently at them.

"Young Yankee puppies," observed one, turning to his companions.

"Rather airy, — I should say breezy," was the rejoinder.

Before long, the fun grew fast and furious at the middies' table; laughter and even the snatch of a song broke from them. Pretty soon one of the

English officers arose — the one who had first noticed their presence. He walked over to their table, and rapped on the edge with the hilt of his sword.

"Less noise, less noise here!" he said.

Bainbridge was about to spring to his feet, when Raymond restrained him. "Have a care," he said softly.

No one noticed the Englishman's presence, and slightly abashed he returned to his seat. But he covered his confusion with an air of bravado. "Taught 'em a lesson," he sniggered.

In a few minutes the whole party had adjourned to the play-house.

Carlotti sang her best, every one was enjoying the music and anxious for more, when the curtain fell on the first act. The *Constitution* lads applauded so long that one might have thought they wished to have the whole thing over again, which they would have liked exceedingly. But seeing at last that the prima donna would not respond, — she had been out five times, — the lads arose and strutted into the lobby in a body.

"There's that officious Britisher," said Bainbridge, nodding his head toward a group of scarlet coats that stood blocking up a doorway.

"Oh, I just heard about him," put in one of the smallest reefers. "He's Tyrone Tyler, the dead shot,

— I overheard some one pointing him out. He's killed eleven men, they say."

The officer in question was tall and exceedingly slender, and he might have been called good-looking if it were not for the insolent eyes, the leering mouth, and arrogant chin that made him so conspicuous. He made some remark that caused the others to laugh as he put up his eyeglass and stared into the faces of the Yankee middies. Some reddened and dropped their glances, but Bainbridge returned the stare with interest. The Englishman frowned and let his glass fall from his eye.

"Care for cub-hunting, Twombly?" he inquired of a red-faced man at his elbow. "Here's a chance for you!"

The midshipmen heard this, but said nothing, and soon they were all lost in the theatre crowd.

During the next intermission all kept their seats but Raymond and Bainbridge, who again strolled out. The taller lad, who looked some years older than his age, which was but nineteen, attracted some attention; many looks of admiration were thrown at him as he passed through the lobby. Suddenly he collided with somebody, who pushed him off.

"Beg pardon," said Bainbridge, making way.

There was no reply, and the lad's handsome brows contracted as he saw the evil face of Captain Tyrone Tyler smiling sneeringly at him. In the course of

a few minutes they met again, and once more came together.

"Beg pardon, sir."

The words had a peculiar intonation this time. They were spoken in the tone of voice one uses when compelled to move something that may disturb another. Bainbridge lifted the infantry captain past with a firm grasp on both his elbows. He moved him as easily as one might lift a lashed hammock to one side.

"Beg pardon, sir," said he again.

The officer grew livid, and had it not been that some one grasped his arm, he would have struck the midshipman across the face. But Bainbridge and Raymond moved quickly away.

As they turned to leave the hall after the performance was over the word was brought that Tyler and three others were waiting at the entrance. After a consultation it was agreed that it would be best to remain, and avoid a meeting if possible. So talking in low voices, the midshipmen stayed on until warned by the dimming lights that the place was being closed. At last a plan was settled on. Bainbridge, who was eager to go out first, was persuaded to remain with Raymond, and follow shortly after the others had left. They singled out, and when the last two stepped past the door, Tyler was still waiting.

"Now for the training," said he, stepping forward. As he spoke he put one elbow in Bainbridge's face, and with the other grasped for his collar.

But he reckoned wrongly. The middy ducked quickly and picked up his cap that had been pushed off by the blow. Then he straightened himself.

"You are a cowardly bully," he said calmly "But I understand you. My card, sir; I am at your service."

As he spoke, he extended a bit of engraved pasteboard. Captain Tyler took it, handed it to one of his friends, and gave his name adding: —

"I trust that you will meet me on the beach under the west fort to-morrow morning at nine o'clock."

"Can you make it earlier?"

"Certainly; at eight, then."

The Englishman laughed as he moved off with his companions.

"Be on hand, my young monkey jacket; I should hate to be turned out so early for nothing."

"Never fear," was Bainbridge's return.

"Oh, Joseph, what have you done?" wailed little Raymond, suddenly. "They will never let you off the ship, and we've broken orders, and are in a frightful mess."

"I'm not going on board again, Sammy; I'm to meet that bully, and I will do it. It's either dis-



"'I observed it,' said the Lieutenant."

grace or death, and I'm reckless now. But run along, you; leave me to myself."

"I shall stay if you do," replied Raymond, stoutly. "It will never be said that — "

"Come, young gentlemen, 'tis about time you were making for the boat. Commodore Preble's orders were very strict; don't forget them."

The speaker was a tall, graceful young man, wrapped in a long watch-cloak. It was Stephen Decatur, the First Lieutenant, and the idol of the ship. He descended the few steps from the entrance to the lobby, and continued as he acknowledged the midshipmen's salute: —

"Come, let's all be moving — stir your stumps now, Mr. Raymond."

As they reached the archway of the pier, Bainbridge held back.

"Come, Mr. Bainbridge, a word with you," said Decatur, taking the lad kindly by the arm. He was but five or six years the senior, but his manner was almost fatherly. "Have you anything to tell me?"

"Yes, sir. I have broken orders."

"I observed it," said the Lieutenant. "Have you anything else to say."

"Yes, sir; unless you insist, I'd rather stay on shore to-night."

"You will return to the ship."

"Very good, sir."

In silence the party was rowed back, and in silence they climbed the side and came on deck.

Then the First Lieutenant spoke. "Mr. Bainbridge, wait on deck here until my return."

"What's up, Raymond?" asked the lads as soon as they had gone below to the steerage where they swung their hammocks. "Did Bainbridge have a row, after all? What's going to happen?"

"Don't ask me," was the reply; "you know as much as I do." Raymond concluded that it was best to keep mum on the subject, and with this he tumbled into his hammock.

Bainbridge waited up on deck for half an hour. He had not the least idea what was going to be done with him. But he was grieving bitterly. If he did not meet the Englishman, he was disgraced,—his name was known, "he owed it to the honor of the service"; for that was the way the code was established. But how could he have disobeyed the order of Decatur to proceed on board ship? That would have been impossible, also. Yet, strange to say, he did not regret his action, and he had not once felt a thrill of fear. True, Tyler was a noted man-killer, but that did not worry Bainbridge in the least. He may have been a fatalist, but that was not the only reason: he knew without bragging that he was a good shot.

Suddenly he heard some one approaching. He

lifted his despondent head out of his hands. Was he going to be called into the cabin to take a rating from the fiery tongue of the Commodore. Could he stand that!

"Mr. Bainbridge."

"Yes, sir."

"Commodore Preble's orders are for me to go on shore to-morrow at seven thirty in the morning. By the way, you will go with me—"

"Oh, thank you, sir," interrupted the midshipman, his voice breaking; "thank you."

"I shall attend to everything, if you will allow me the honor."

Bainbridge put out his hand; Decatur took it without a word.

The next morning, on a narrow stretch of beach, there was a curious little gathering, or, better, two separate groups: one composed of five men talking together, and at a few paces' distance two silent figures.

The five men were conversing in whispers.

"Nevertheless, I intend doing it," said the tall slender man who was in the centre. "Do you see the button at his throat? A Yankee more or less does not count."

"Are you ready, gentlemen?"

The others stepped back, and there stood two tall figures fronting one another: each held a long

heavy pistol in the right hand. The faces of the men were pale, but the midshipman was just as cool as his experienced opponent; a determined gleam was in his light blue eyes.

The officer who had last spoken began counting, and then there came a flash and one report. The pistols had been discharged at the same instant.

Bainbridge reeled slightly, and passed his hand about his throat.

"I am all right," he said calmly.

"Thank God! Then let's be off," was Decatur's sole return.

Lying on the sand was Tyler "the dead shot," the surgeon fumbling at his chest. Decatur and the midshipman raised their hats as they passed by.

So much for the first duel; now for the sequel. In this modern day we can scarcely imagine the complaisant attitude assumed by press and public towards such happenings as this. Were they less careful of human life, or did they view matters in such a different light that their perceptions were altogether blunted? No, not that exactly; many men fought duels who did not believe in the resort to arms at all. They were compelled to by the deluded custom of the times. Few men were *brave* enough to refuse a challenge. But one thing, a man who was known to have figured on the field of

honor, sooner or later found himself there again, and generally it was once too often.

The second duel to be told about here, has a slight connection with the first, and yet belongs more properly to history. Commodore William Bainbridge, who was one of Decatur's most intimate friends, was grateful indeed for the manner in which he had stood by his brother, and when Decatur stood in need of some one to do the same thing by him, it was but natural that he should turn to Bainbridge.

But now to get back to history: Stephen Decatur had, against his will, been one of the members of the court martial that had sentenced Commodore Barron to suspension from the navy for five years because of the affair of the *Chesapeake* and the *Leopard*. Barron had gone abroad, and was in England when the War of 1812 was declared. His period of suspension ended shortly after the declaration, but he did not return to America until over a year had elapsed; and then presenting himself without explanation, he demanded the command of an important ship. Decatur used every effort to prevent his securing active employment, taking the ground, as he explained in a letter written to Barron himself, that the latter's conduct "had been such as to forever bar readmission into the service." He disclaimed any feeling of personal enmity, but was firm in his opposition. For years this was the state of affairs;

the correspondence between Barron and Decatur grew more bitter and ironical, and at last it culminated thus: —

Writes Barron on the sixteenth of January, 1820, dated Norfolk: —

SIR: Your letter of the 29th ultimo, I have received. In it you say that you have now to inform me that you shall pay no further attention to any communications that I may make to you, other than a direct call to the field; in answer to which I have only to reply that whenever you will consent to meet me on fair and equal grounds, that is, such as two honorable men may consider just and proper, you are at liberty to view this as that call. The whole tenor of your conduct to me justifies this course of proceeding on my part. As for your charges and remarks, I regard them not, particularly your sympathy. You know no such feeling. I cannot be suspected of making the attempt to excite it.

I am, sir, yours, etc.,

JAMES BARRON.

To this, Decatur replied as follows: —

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24, 1820.

SIR: I have received your communication of the 16th, and am at a loss to know what your intention is. If you intend it as a challenge, I accept it, and refer you to my friend, Commodore Bainbridge, who is fully authorized to make any arrangements he pleases as regards weapons, mode, or distance. Your obedient servant,

STEPHEN DECATUR.

And so the fatal meeting was arranged. Captain Elliot, Barron's representative, and Bainbridge chose Bladensburg, a beautiful spot within driving distance of the Capitol, as the duelling ground. Letters describing contemporary events give such vivid pictures of past scenes, that it is well to quote entire the letter of Samuel Hambleton, one of Decatur's closest friends, who was present. This letter was written shortly after the meeting had taken place.

WASHINGTON, March 22, 1820.

. . . This morning, agreeably to his request, I attended Commodore Bainbridge in a carriage to the Capitol hill, where I ordered breakfast at Beale's hotel for three persons. At the moment it was ready, Commodore Decatur, having walked from his own house, arrived and partook of it with us. As soon as it was over he proceeded in our carriage towards Bladensburg. At breakfast he mentioned that he had a paper with him that he wished to sign (meaning his will), but that it required three witnesses, and as it would not do to call in any third person for that purpose he would defer it until we arrived at the ground. He was quite cheerful, and did not appear to have any desire to take the life of his antagonist; indeed, he declared he would be very sorry to do so. On arriving at the valley half a mile short of Bladensburg we halted and found Captain Elliot standing in the road on the brow of the hill beyond us. Commodore Bainbridge and myself walked up and gave him the necessary

information, when he returned to the village. In a short time Commodore Barron, Captain Elliot, his second, and Mr. Lattimer arrived on the ground, which was measured (eight long strides) and marked by Commodore Bainbridge nearly north and south, and the seconds proceeded to load. Commodore Bainbridge won the choice of stands, and his friend chose that to the north, being a few inches lower than the other.

On taking their stands, Commodore Bainbridge told them to observe that he should give the words quick — "Present; one, two, three," and they were not, at their peril, to fire before the word "one" nor after the word "three" was pronounced. Commodore Barron asked him if he had any objections to pronouncing the words as he intended to give them. He said he had not, and did so.

Commodore Barron, about this moment, observed to his antagonist that he hoped, on meeting in another world, they would be better friends than they had been in this; to which Commodore Decatur replied, "I have never been your enemy, sir." Nothing further passed between them previous to the firing. Soon after Commodore Bainbridge cautioned them to be ready, crossed over to the left of his friend, and gave the words of command precisely as before; and at the word "two" they both fired so nearly together that but one report was heard.

They both fell nearly at the same instant. Commodore Decatur was raised and supported a short distance, and sank down near to where Commodore Barron lay; and both appeared to think themselves mortally wounded. Commodore Barron declared that everything had been

conducted in the most honorable manner, and told Commodore Decatur that he forgave him from the bottom of his heart. Soon after this, a number of gentlemen coming up, I went after our carriage and assisted in getting him into it; where, leaving him under the care of several of his intimate friends, Commodore Bainbridge and myself left the grounds, and, as before agreed to, embarked on board the tender of the *Columbus* at the Navy Yard. It is due to Commodore Bainbridge to observe that he expressed his determination to lessen the danger to each by giving the words quick, with a hope that both might miss and that then their quarrel might be amicably settled.

SAMUEL HAMBLETON.

Commodore Bainbridge told of hearing the following conversation as Decatur and Barron lay beside each other bleeding on the ground.

"Barron," said the Commodore, "we both, I believe, are about to appear before our God. I am going to ask you one question. Answer it if you feel inclined. . . . Why did you not return to America upon the outbreak of hostilities with England?"

Barron was suffering great agony, but he turned and spoke clearly in a low tone. "Decatur, I will tell you what I expected never to tell a living man. I was in an English prison for debt!"

"Ah, Barron," returned Decatur, "had I known that, had any one of your brother-officers known it, the purse of the service would have been at

your disposal, and you and I would not have been lying here to-day."

"Had I known you felt thus," answered Barron, "we would have no cause to be here."

Sad words these, sad unfortunate words, because they came too late. Poor Decatur! he died at half past ten o'clock that night. When he was struck by the ball which lodged in his abdomen, he is said to have spoken thus, "I am hurt mortally, and wish that I had fallen in defence of my country." Yes, that was his great sorrow; he saw the uselessness of it all.

So much for the code duello, so much for false pride and extreme ideas of what should touch one's honor. Can we think that such things really happened, and so short a time ago! Have we not reason to rejoice that it is all over? That people no longer start at the sound of shots in shady lanes, run across tragedies on lawns or in tavern courtyards? There is just another word or so to add that points a stronger moral and rounds up the chapter: Joseph Bainbridge fell also in a duel. He, alas, had many of them; but like all the rest, there was a last one. The public mourned many times because good men were lost for causes in which the nation had no interest and that could have been passed by with a wave of the hand. A sad history that of "the field of honor."

DARTMOOR

DARTMOOR

THE word "Dartmoor" means little to the ear of the American of this generation, for it is the name of a town on the bleak open stretches back from the sea in Devonshire. But during our war with England, and for a long time afterward, the word "Dartmoor" brought up much the same kind of recollections that "Andersonville" or "Libby" does to-day. It was the prison where England kept in confinement those unfortunates that the fate of war had thrown upon her hands. It was a safe seclusion, indeed, and for the better explanation of the story that is to be told here, it might be well worth the while to tell in a few words what manner of place it was. Surrounding an enclosure, circular in shape, and containing about eight acres, was a high stone wall, where the sentries patrolled their beats, where they could look down into the courtyards of the gloomy prison buildings some twenty feet below them. The enclosure was divided into three partitions, by walls that crossed the main space diagonally, and through which there were grated gateways leading from one department

to the other. The buildings, seven in number, radiated from a common point like wheel spokes. They were built of brick, with small iron-barred windows, and in the entrance archway, leading from one yard to another (each building had a separate yard), there were always stationed after sunset two armed sentries with primed muskets. While the occupants of any one building had access to all parts of it and to the others during the daytime, it was difficult, indeed, to make a journey, or pay a visit, after nightfall.

Here were confined six thousand prisoners, and here were suffered hardships without number. There would be scarcely space to tell of the prison life, but some there were there who had been immured so long that they had almost forgotten that they had lived anywhere else. They had become so resigned to the lot of a prisoner of war, that they had begun to doubt if they should ever see their own beautiful country again. From the upper windows of the prisons, the view above the walls was nothing but a stretch of bleak, rolling country, treeless and barren — the Dartmoor heaths. The inmates had formed a government among themselves; as was done in most military prisons, many worked at their trades, as well as they could; they had markets in which they sold their wares; they had theatrical companies, which served to keep up their

spirits, and lighten the dreary hours; but there was one thought in the hearts of all: the day when they should receive their liberty. Many were never to see that day.

There was a young sailor confined in the prison building known as No. 5. His strong constitution and his youth had kept him in a fair state of health for one who had been so long in close confinement, for he had been captured in a privateer in the first year of the war. Many times had he thought of his far-away home on the hills above the old town of Salem. He was popular with his fellow-prisoners, and had been a leader among them in their sports and pastimes. George Abbott was his name. He was but six and twenty years of age, and yet he had followed the sea for over twelve. When he had been captured there had been taken with him a young lad of but eighteen, who had run away from a comfortable home and a loving family, to enlist on board the privateer, but he was not of the tough fibre of which the sailor should be made, and since his arrival in prison he had been gradually succumbing to the effects of his long imprisonment. Between Abbott and this young man there had grown up a deep affection. The sailor had shielded the landsman from much of the rough treatment of the forecastle while on board ship, and now that they were prisoners together, they had been constant compan-

ions; but it was plain to see that the younger of the two would not last long enough to see the dawn of liberty unless it came quickly. He had grown so weak that by the middle of February, 1815, it was expected by all that every day he would be taken from the prison buildings and sent to the Depot Hospital, from which, alas, few ever returned. But Abbott nursed him carefully, and watched over him with all the care of an elder brother, trying to be always cheerful.

March came, and with it the gloomy mists that rose from all around settled down on the gloomy heaths, shrouding the prison buildings in impenetrable clouds. It was hard to keep either dry or warm. Those fortunates who owned little stoves would huddle around their handful of fire, but the prisons being unheated and unprovided with chimneys, the stoves were very small, their little pipes being led out of the windows.

Lying in a hammock that had been swung low, so that its occupant almost lay upon the floor, was the young landsman. He stretched out his hand toward the roughly made brazier of sheet iron, and so thin were they that they looked more like claws than the fingers of a human being.

"Lord help us and deliver us," he murmured.

"Hallo, Harvey," cried a voice, breaking in upon his prayer. "I didn't expect to be so long. We've

waited a long time, but here it is, my lad, and now let's begin. Shall I pitch in first? I ain't much of a reader."

He held aloft in his hand a copy of a smudgy, dog-eared book, smirched and torn by constant handling.

"We've been waiting our turn on this for three weeks, now. Sam Jordan, he promised to get it for me though, and so he did."

"What's the name?" inquired the pinched-faced lad in the hammock.

"It's R-a-s-s-e-l-a-s," was the response. "I dunno how to pronounce it, but they say as how it's good reading. Say the word, and I'll fire away."

He flung himself down on the floor and opened the pages. It was storming hard outside, and the rain beat against the roof and poured from the gutters down on the stone courtyard. There was just enough light to see the print, if one was not afraid of ruining one's eyes, and Abbott began: —

"'Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy and pursue'—" He had read as far as the first half-page, when suddenly the sick man put out his hand and touched him on the shoulder.

"Listen," he said hoarsely, "what's that going on below?"

Some one on the floor beneath had given a loud

staccato whoop. It was followed by another, and then by an increasing murmur of voices. The sailor had risen to his knees and dropped the book.

"Some skylarking or tomfoolery," he said; "or perhaps it's the Rough Alleys," he added.

The "Rough Alleys" was the name given to the gangs of hard customers and those of the lower order of prisoners who had been compelled by their more circumspecting and better behaved companions to mess by themselves, and to generally toe the mark, as much as possible. Occasionally, however, they would break out in some sort of raid or riot that would require suppressing, and it was to this habit of theirs that Abbott referred. But this time he was mistaken.

"Listen to that!" he cried, all at once springing to an erect position. A roaring, rousing cheer came up from below, and then from the other buildings they heard it echoed.

The invalid arose from his hammock.

"Stay here," cried Abbott; "I'll fetch the news to you."

He hastened to the head of the stone stairway. A breathless man dressed in fantastic rags met him half-way up.

"What's the row, Simeon?" asked Abbott, in excitement.

"Heard the news, messmate?" the man cried in

answer. "Heard the news? There's peace between America and England!"

There came a strange sound from the head of the stairs. The young prisoner had heard the words, and Abbott was just in time to catch him in his arms as he plunged forward senseless.

What had these men expected? These prisoners who had danced and sung and gone wild with delight and joy at the message that had been brought to them that bleak March day? Why, liberty at once. They were going to return to their homes. It was freedom! And did they get it? Listen! There is more to tell. Here begins the story: —

Of course it was not to be supposed that the British government should at once set these prisoners free, as one might set free birds from a cage by opening the door and allowing them to fly. It was a grave question what was to be done with them, and there is no use denying the fact that the United States, or at least its representative in England, was in a great measure responsible for what subsequently occurred. Ten days went by, and there was nothing done. In that space of time the men's spirits sank to zero. Had their country deserted them? Had their fellow-citizens forgotten them? It was past believing that such things could be. And it was just at this time that there was most complaint,

arising from the quality of the bread and the insufficiency of the food supplied by the prison authorities. The Governor of the Depot, as it was called by the English, was a Captain Shortland, a man so well hated and despised by those under him that if murderous looks had the power to kill, he would long ago have been under the sod. Many of the prisoners, as they had caught glimpses of him, had longed to sink their fingers into his throat, and now they hated him worse than ever before. In the beginning of the second week information was sent the rounds of the prison, that the delay was occasioned by the difficulty that the representative of the United States government found in obtaining cartels, or vessels, to bring the released ones back to their own again. But the delay was bitter.

The poor sick boy had rallied a little during the first days after the arrival of the news of peace. Probably he supposed that he would be released at once, but as the days dragged on, and there were no signs of any change in their condition, he sank again into the unfortunate path of the men who slowly died because they had no hope.

From a condition of joyousness, the majority of the prisoners had relapsed into sullen anger — anger at their own country, and an increased hatred for the red coats who guarded them. Among so many prisoners of all classes there were, of course, men of

all kinds and character: there were the ignorant and degraded, and those who could well lay claim to education and enlightenment. Harvey Rich, who was now so weak that he could scarcely totter from his hammock to the head of the stairway, had been prepared to enter Harvard College, when he had caught the fever of adventure and had run away to sea. At the request of the inmates of Prison No. 5, he had drawn up a letter addressed to Mr. B.—— (the American agent), requesting him to make all haste; and, at least, if he could do no more, to secure to them an additional supply of provisions, or make a monthly allowance of some kind to save the men from actual starvation. Anxiously was an answer awaited, but none came.

One day late in the month, when, for a wonder, the sun was shining brightly, there was a strange group gathered near one of the open windows on the top floor of Prison No. 5. Propped up by blankets, so as to get as much of the sunshine that came in at the grated window as possible, was Harvey Rich. Beside him sat the young seaman, and squatted on the floor near by was a remarkable-looking human being. His face was black, his dark hair was shorn close to his head, and a bandage made of a torn bandanna handkerchief was pushed up on his forehead. At first glance, one would have taken him for a negro, although his

features showed no trace of African descent. The torn shirt that he wore was unloosed and open at the bosom. The skin which showed through from underneath was fair and white. Every now and then he would give a nervous start and look back over his shoulder.

"They almost had you last night, Simeon," said Abbott to the half-black man.

"Yes," returned the other; "I thought my jig was up, for sure; but, confound it! now that there is peace, I don't see why they wish to hound me any more. 'Tis that brute, — Shortland. He's angry at his lack of success as a man-catcher. I'd like to get my hands upon him, — only once, just once, — that's all."

Abbott happened to look out of the window at this instant.

"Egad!" said he, "your friends are out again."

From the grated bars, a view of the neighboring courtyard could be obtained. There was a sight that, when seen, used to make the prisoners' blood boil hotly. Three men, heavily manacled, were walking with weak steps to and fro along the narrow space enclosed between the high brick walls. The clanking of their chains could be heard as they moved. But as if this were not enough, beside them walked three sentries, with bayonets fixed. For half an hour each day, they made this

sorrowful parade. It was their only glimpse of the sky and the sunlight, their one breath of fresh air during the twenty-four; and, as soon as it was over, they were hustled back to their place of confinement, — a dungeon known as the Cachet, — where no light could penetrate, and the only air that reached them was through the shaft of a disused chimney. No wonder that their eyes blinked and the tears rolled down their cheeks when they emerged into God's bright sunlight. No wonder that their haggard, pale faces grew each day more deathlike. These men were being killed by inches. For what crime? It will be shown. The man whom Abbott had addressed as "Simeon" had crawled to the window and was peeping cautiously out. A wild curse broke from him, as he viewed the sight.

"Look at poor Whitten," he said; "take note of him; he's not for long. He used to tell me that he knew that he was going mad. He's that already. See the poor devil jabbering."

He gave a shudder. It was only six weeks since he had walked to and fro in that same courtyard. There was a grated gateway at one end. It came within a few feet of the archway at the top. A silent crowd of prisoners were gathered there, closely watching the unfortunates. Well did they all remember the day when there were four of

them; that day when, just as the prisoners turned, in following the footsteps of the sentries, one of them had left his companions, and, making a great leap of it, had clambered up the iron gate, and, manacled as he was, had thrown himself down among them.

Immediately they had carried him into one of the prison houses, where they had filed and removed his shackles, and had since hidden and protected him at great cost and sacrifice. Many of their privileges had been withdrawn because they would not give up this man; they had been routed out at night by files of soldiers; they had been counted and mustered, over and over again, and yet, among the many thousand who knew where Simeon Hays was hiding, there was not one so base as to betray him, not one to point the directing finger. All honor to them. Many were the disguises that Simeon had been forced to assume. He had been a mulatto mess-cook, speaking with the French accent of Louisiana; he had appeared as a black-faced yawping Sambo, who had cracked guffawing jokes on the heads of the searchers; he had passed a day and a night in a coffin-like space between the floor-beams, when they had him cornered, and yet they had not caught him.

And for what crime were these men treated thus? For a crime that was never proved against them. They had been taken by a British frigate from a

recaptured prize, and shortly afterward the vessel had been found to be on fire. These men had been accused of attempting to blow up the ship and her company, and when they were sent to Dartmoor they were under sentence to close confinement. Here was Shortland's opportunity. His cruel and vindictive spirit rejoiced in carrying out the order, and it chagrined him deeply that one should have made his escape, and every day he attempted to locate his hiding-place and return him to the prison — to the torture of the dreaded Cachet.

Soon the half-hour's breathing space had expired, and the manacled ones had been withdrawn from sight. The prisoners flocked to their buildings for their midday meal. Hays, who had descended to the courtyard, had made all haste to return to No. 5, where he was then supposed to be hiding, although, owing to his bold disposition, he oftentimes made the range of the lot; and as he passed by the open space on this day, although he did not know it, a turnkey recognized him, and soon those in No. 5 Prison were alarmed by the cry "The guard is coming! Lie low, lie low!" But they found that the entrances were held by a squad of armed soldiers, and that this time Hays appeared certain to be apprehended. But search here or there, the soldiers could not find him. Many times had they stepped over his hiding-place in the floor.

Captain Shortland, who had been afraid to enter the building to personally conduct the search, remained outside with a strong guard. The disappointed officer reported at last that he was unsuccessful.

"Why don't you drive them from the building, then?" Shortland thundered.

"They are sailors, sir, and will not be driven by soldiers, they say. They seem to treat the whole affair as a great joke, laughing and scampering ahead of my men, and paying no attention to my orders."

"Run them through then," Shortland returned. "A little cold steel will teach a serviceable lesson!"

At this minute one of the turnkeys approached.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, saluting; "if you let me turn the men out in the usual manner, I think they will leave quietly, but you must withdraw the soldiers."

Reluctantly, Shortland gave the order, and the red coats filed out, drawing up in line, behind which he carefully placed himself. The turnkey entered the building alone. He had been an old boatswain in the service, and drawing a silver whistle from his pocket he piped all hands. Then in a stentorian voice he ordered the prisoners into the yard. They all obeyed, crowding out to the number of one thousand or more, and they filed past the soldiers in a compact body. One of the last to leave the building was Harvey Rich. He tottered down,

alone, and joined the crowd, that stood packed in a sullen body, crowded within a few paces of the handful of soldiers, who stood with their muskets cocked and ready. Soon the officer returned from his fruitless search.

"The man cannot be found, sir," he said.

Shortland swore viciously.

"Turn them back in the building, then," he roared, "and keep them there without water. That will fetch them to their senses.— Back through that doorway, all of you," pointing with the heavy stick which he always carried, for he was a gouty man.

But the prisoners had heard his threat, and not one of them moved a step. There was a large trough of clear water in the yard, to which they had free access. The weather was warm and clear. Suddenly one of them stepped forward. All eyes turned upon him. It was George Abbott.

"We will not return there, under those conditions," he said loudly. "We will stay here, and die, first, every man Jack of us."

A movement began among the prisoners. They crowded in closer in the narrow space, and a murmur as of a subdued cheer arose among them. Shortland was furious.

"Seize that man," he cried; "seize him! He shall go without bread and water both."

No one moved.

"You cowards," he muttered. "I'll do it myself, then; make way here!"

He crowded through the file of soldiers and approached the sailor, who was standing there calmly, with folded arms. But before he had taken three short steps, something most unexpected happened. Harvey Rich, who was standing but a few feet away, stooped swiftly and picking up a loosened bit of the stonework of the courtyard, he hurled it full at Shortland's head. It would have killed him had it struck him, but it only grazed his cheek. Shortland halted and retreated hurriedly.

"Fire on them," he cried. "Take aim and fire."

Thirty or forty muskets were brought to the shoulder. But the young officer in command of the detachment kept his senses. Calmly he walked out to the front. He knocked up the muzzles with his unsheathed sword.

"Steady," he said. "As you were."

Shortland flung an oath at him, and turning to the red coats he screeched at the top of his voice:—

"Fire, you rascals, fire!"

Again the officer sprang forward and threw up the points of the muskets again.

"As you were; steady, men."

That cool authoritative tone saved a frightful scene; for had the volley been delivered at such close

range, there is no telling how much slaughter had followed. But mark this: there would have been enough men left to strew the dismembered bodies of the red coats about the yard with no other weapons but their naked hands!

Shortland, stamping and fuming in anger, turned upon his heel, and hastened out through the gate. Immediately, the Lieutenant called his men to a shoulder arms, and marched them after him, he himself remaining until the last of the squad had passed under the archway. Then he drew a thankful breath. One or two of the sailors nearest the entrance saluted him. Gravely he touched his heavy bearskin hat. There was not a cheer or a sound of the usual merriment that might have accompanied the discomfiture of the "lobster backs." Every one had been too much impressed with the seriousness of the matter in hand. Yet, there was no one to chide Rich for his impetuous action. Silently they all returned to the prison, and once more Simeon Hays emerged from his hiding-place.

This night news was brought to the prisoners that the United States government was going to allow them the sum of seven shillings sixpence per head in addition to their rations given them by the Crown; also the news was circulated that the first cartel would start the following week, and the detachment of those going in her would be read

at the morning's muster. The names were to be taken in alphabetical order. Again there followed great rejoicing in all of the prison buildings. Men whose names began with the first letters of the alphabet were in high spirits. They were congratulated and made much of; while the poor chaps who were to tail off the list were correspondingly depressed. A rather important occurrence took place on this night, also. Simeon Hays, who, as a special treat and in honor of the occasion, had washed the smut from his face, had been recognized and taken. Poor fellow, before his friends could interfere, he had been hurried off to the confinement of the Cachet. Before this news had circulated through the building, Rich and Abbott had held a long conversation. The former was objecting strenuously and earnestly to a proposition that the young sailor had made.

"I cannot think of such a thing," he remonstrated. "It would not be right—"

Abbott interrupted him, "What is the use, messmate, of talking about right, in such a case?" He lowered his voice, "Do you think I could go out and look any man square up and down if I left ye here? You've got to do it."

Rich shook his head weakly, "I can't think of doing such a thing," he murmured.

"We'll stow all further conversation," was the

reply, and with that he got up and left Rich alone.

The next morning, in each prison, a number of names were read off until two hundred had been called. Abbott's was the first read in Prison No. 5. The lucky ones were told to get their dunnage ready and report at the prison entrance at half past ten. At the hour named, all were there.

"George Abbott," called out the officer in charge of the guard-room.

"Here," answered a weak voice, and to the surprise of those who knew him, Harvey Rich stepped forward. A moment later, and he had passed forth into the free air outside.

Abbott answered to his friend's name at the roll-call, and thereafter passed by the name of Rich. They would come to his name on the list some day, he reasoned, and he knew well enough that another week or so of prison life would have finished his young friend for good and all.

On the 3d of April, owing to the prison authorities trying to change the fare from soft bread to hardtack, there was a small riot among the prisoners, which, however, resulted in their obtaining their object by breaking down the barriers and raiding the bread-room. This did not increase Shortland's good humor, nor did the taunts levelled at the soldiery tend to improve the feeling existing

between them and the triumphant sailors. On the sixth of the month, it was fine, clear weather, and the prisoners were put in good spirits by the news that Hays and his companions, the word of whose condition had reached higher ears than Shortland's, had been liberated and had left the prison. From all the various yards there was shouting and singing. The morning's "Liberty Party," as the sailors called the lucky ones who were to start for America, had been seen off, with rousing cheers. Those left behind were trying to amuse themselves by games and horseplay. A score or more were playing ball against the cross-wall dividing the barrack yard of the soldiers from that of No. 7. In some way, the ball, thrown by a careless hand, sailed across the barrier and fell almost at the feet of a sentry on the opposite side.

"Hi, there, Johnny Bull! heave it back to us," requested one of the men, through the iron grating. The sentry paid no attention, and soon there was a clamoring crowd surrounding the opening, beseeching the imperturbable red coat in all sorts of terms to "Be a good fellow, and toss back the ball."

"Just heave it over, Johnny," called one. "Don't you think you're strong enough?"

The sentry whirled angrily. "Come and get it, if you want it," he said.

"Can we?" shouted a half-dozen voices.

"I won't touch it," the sentry responded. With that, he resumed his beat, cursing the ball players for "a lot of troublesome Yankee blackguards."

Half laughing, the sailors had loosened one of the stones close against the wall, and by luck found that the ground was soft and yielding. The mortar, too, they were able to remove easily, and with such objects as they could pick up to help them, they fell to burrowing like rabbits. The sentry, who did not know what was going on, or how his words had been taken up, was surprised when suddenly he saw a man's head and shoulders appear at the base of the wall on his side.

"The prisoners are digging out!" he roared, firing his musket.

At once, the soldiers on the walls began firing, forming into squads and keeping up a constant shooting as long as any prisoners were in sight. Those in the central yard, known as the Market, not knowing the reason for the fusilade, and wondering why the alarm bell was ringing, did not retreat into their buildings; and the first thing they knew, Shortland himself appeared, entering the big gate at the head of a company of soldiers with fixed bayonets. They advanced at a double-quick step, the prisoners were so crowded together that they could not escape. Some, not seeing why they

should be charged in this fashion, stood their ground. Shortland had lost all control of himself.

"Halt! Aim!" And before the astounded victims knew what was going to happen, he had given the word to fire.

A crashing volley sounded. When the smoke cleared away, wounded and dying men filled the yard. The rest, panic-stricken, had retreated into the buildings. Seven were killed and fifty-six were wounded! Poor Abbott, who had been trying to urge his comrades to hasten, was among the first to fall, shot through the lungs. As no one told of his exchange of names, he was buried under the name he had assumed, Harvey Rich. And what of the real owner of that name? Alas, he, poor fellow, also, did not live to see his home in the New Hampshire hills, for he died at sea not long after the cartel in which he was returning had set sail. He was sent overboard in the sailor's canvas shroud, and the name "George Abbott" was stricken from the list of liberated ones. Few knew the truth, and, perhaps, few there were who cared.



The deadly volley.



THE RIVAL LIFE-SAVERS

THE RIVAL LIFE-SAVERS

IT was February, the year after the war. The month had been cold and stormy. Frequent and sudden squalls had kept everybody on the alert. For over two months the United States frigate *Macedonian* (she once had H. M. S. prefixed to her name, by the way) had been facing the bad weather, that had ranged from the Bermudas as far to the eastward as the Bay of Biscay. It was blowing great guns on this particular morning, and blowing with that promise of thick weather that seamen learn to recognize so readily. Not two miles away an English frigate was seen coming grandly along as she shortened sail.

It did not require the aid of the falling barometer or the sight of the thick black clouds gathering to the northeast, to prove that they were in for it again.

Two men were on the *Macedonian's* main topgallant yard. They were trying to spill the wind out of the sail that was standing straight up above their heads like a great balloon.

"Confound this business, anyhow," grunted the older man. "Did you ever see such an evil-acting

bit of rag in your life?" He pounded into the struggling canvas, as if he could sink his blunt fingers in the folds and obtain a better grasp. But the wind had firm hold on it, and had filled it so taut that it was struggling and moving like the body of a living thing.

"Hold hard!" suddenly exclaimed the younger man; "I see what's the matter." Just the second before he spoke, the leech of the topgallant sail had caught over the end of the yard arm. He lay out on the yard to clear it, his loosened hair and his big collar flapping across his face.

The elder man shouted something to him, probably in warning; but the sails were making such a thunder of it that his words could not be heard. When the leech was cast loose, the yard gave a heavy pitch, the sail gave a jump that tore it from the hands of the men nearer inboard, and the young fellow, whose balance was upset by the sudden movement, lost his hold and fell back with a sudden cry of fright. He caught at one of the beckets as he slipped; but it carried away, and down he went, striking the water within a few feet of the frigate's side.

The officer of the deck, who had been roaring up angry imprecations to the "lazy lubbers" on the yard to "make haste and get in that sail," jumped back toward the wheel. Carrying the press of canvas she was then under, the *Macedonian* was making not

far from thirteen or fourteen knots, and almost directly before the wind. It was no laughing matter to bring her up all standing, as it were; and though men were jumping here and there, hauling and heaving with the added strength that comes from the dread cry "Man overboard!" it was almost five minutes before the great ship had headed up, and during that time she had left the spot where the poor lad had gone down, by a mile and more. The Lieutenant, when he had given his first order, had thrown overboard one of the boat's gratings, and this had been followed by one of the chicken coops on the forecastle. With the squall coming down upon her, and the stiff wind increasing every minute, the *Macedonian* lurched up and down, almost burying her nose in the roaring, tumbling sea. Every one was on deck.

"'Tis no use trying to lower away a boat now, Mr. Edwards," observed Captain Stewart. "'Twould be only risking the lives of brave men. Stand by for a few minutes and keep sharp lookout." Although it was blowing hard, the air was filled with a thick, gray mist, and the sky now appeared to close down upon the water. It was a lonely, fearful place for a man to be out there in the waste of the waters, fighting for his life. It was a lonely, fearful feeling for men to have who must leave him there. And they all knew him well; they liked him, for he was a

cheerful, laughing lad. The old sailor who had been on the yard arm with him had descended to the deck. He was telling it breathlessly to the men gathered about him.

"Why," said he, "I hollers to him to be careful when the sail fetched away. It was just as if the yard tried to fling him off like that." He snapped his fingers at arm's length.

A man who was standing on one of the anchor-flukes well forward suddenly pointed out to leeward. The English frigate, that had been last seen holding a course due west, was now, evidently, engaged in making all snug for the coming blow. She had heaved to, and was now lying with topsail aback, rearing and plunging, — sometimes pitching down until her hull was completely hidden in the hollows of the seas. The mist had blown away. A clear, shadowless, distance-killing light succeeded it. It was hard to tell whether the frigate was two miles off, or whether she was a little toy boat in the near perspective. But the heaving water that lay between the ships, crossed with its lines of white, rolling foam, was no toy thing. It had an angry, spiteful look. It was pitiless, and yet had lost the dread that it held when hidden in the treacherous half-gloom of the mist.

But why had the English frigate come up into

the wind? All hands had rushed to the side. It was almost as if they had forgotten the frightful cause of their own delaying. Soon all was understood. There was a tiny, white speck drifting to the southward of the English vessel. It would heave to the top of a great sea and disappear again.

"One of their boats is out!" roared the man who was standing forward, using his hands for a trumpet.

The officers on the quarter-deck had now sighted both the vessel and the little object far astern of her. The First Lieutenant was squinting through the glass and talking excitedly.

"Egad, sir, I can make it out; there's a man clinging to a cask or something just to leeward of that cutter. There are eight good men in that boat, I can tell you," he added, "but I think they have lost sight of him."

The lashings of the whaleboat, which most American vessels carried, had been cast loose some time before. The Captain touched the Lieutenant on the arm.

"He's as near to us as he is to them; call away the whaleboat," he said quietly; and then, turning to a young, boyish-looking officer, — one of the senior midshipmen, — he said, "Mr. Emmett, you will go with her."

"Clear away the bowlines!" roared the Lieutenant. "Man the after-braces! Be lively, lads—lower away!"

With a cheer, the men of the crew—picked oarsmen and ex-whalemen they were—Nantucket and New Bedford fellows—jumped to the side. The long, narrow boat was lowered with half her crew in her. The other half slid down the falls. Mr. Edwards leaned over the side, holding his hat on with both his hands.

"Mr. Emmett," cried he, "you bring back that man; don't let the Britishers beat you!"

The midshipman looked up, touched his cap, and grinned.

The man handling the steering-oar was a grizzled, hawk-nosed down-easter. Many a time had he brought his boat up to the side of a whale when the seas were running high, and when it would have appeared that a small boat could not have lived, much less fight the greatest, strongest beast to be found on all this earth.

The excitement of the moment cut into the blood of the oarsmen. They were going down with the wind, and they fairly jumped the boat from one wave-crest to the other. But occasionally, as a heavier sea would come up astern of them, they would race down and lag for an instant in the hollow until lifted by the next.

The tall Yankee must have been reminded of the time when he raced with the other rival boats in order to get fast with the harpoon first, for he began encouraging in the old whaleman fashion: —

"Give way, my lads, give way! A long, steady stroke now! Do ye love gin? A bottle of gin to the best man!" forgetting that he was no longer the first mate of the old *Penobscot*. "Oh, pile it on while you have breath! pile it on! On with the beef, my bullies!"

The men, with set teeth and straining backs, were catching together beautifully, despite the fact that the wind threatened to twist the oars out of their grasp. The little middy, sitting in the stern sheets, had folded his arms; but he was swinging backward and forward to every lift and heave, with the same strange grin upon his face. And now the steersman caught sight of the English boat as she hove up to the top of a great wave. It was plain that they had lost sight of the object they were seeking. "Oars!" cried the steersman. The men ceased rowing, and watched him with anxious and nervous eyes, waiting for the word to get down to it again.

"There he is, Mr. Emmett! about a half a mile away there, sir, almost dead ahead! And egad, they see him too!" for just as he had spoken the English sweeps had caught the water with a plash.

Once more the boat-steerer's tongue was set awagging. It was a race now down the two sides of a triangle; a fair race and a grand one.

"Every devil's imp of you pull! No talking; lay back to it! Now or never!" yelled the steerer.

The heavy English cutter, with her eight men at the oars, had caught the fever too, and the five rowers in the Yankee boat had work cut out for them. The midshipman was now standing up, balancing himself easily, with his legs spread wide apart.

"We'll have that man, my lads!" he shrieked. "Only think he's ours, and there's no mistake, he will be ours! Give way, give way! Now we have him!"

The man could now plainly be seen, clinging to the top of the chicken coop.

"It's Brant, of the starboard watch, sir," said the steersman, leaning over. "Harkee, he sees us."

It appeared as if both boats would arrive at the same moment, when suddenly a most surprising thing occurred. The man waved his hand, and leaving the small but buoyant raft that had supported him, he plunged head first into the water and struck out for the whaleboat hand over hand. The bow oar leaned over and caught him by the back of the shirt. A quick heave, and he was landed between the thwarts.



"'Now we have him, lads!'"



"I hated to spoil a good race, messmates," he panted, "or I'd come off to you before."

The English cutter was now alongside. The men in the two boats were looking at one another curiously.

"Thank you very much for your trouble," cried Midshipman Emmett, taking off his hat, and having to shout his words very slowly and distinctly in order for them to be heard.

"Nothing at all, I assure you, sir," came the answer from the young man in the other boat. "We saw the whole thing happen, and would have been glad to pick him up for you. This is Mr. Farren of the *Hebe*."

"This is Mr. Emmett of the *Macedonian*. Good day!"

"Good day!"

The stern way of the English vessel had carried her well to leeward of the boats; the frigate had come about, and was slowly bearing down to pick the whaleboat up. Amid great cheering she was hoisted in at the davits. The hero of the occasion saluted the quarter-deck and walked forward through the crowd, whose anxiety had now changed to merriment. At last he saw the old sailor who had been on the main topsail-yard with him.

"Bill," said he, "what was you sayin' when I left the yard to umpire that thar race?"



RANDOM ADVENTURES



RANDOM ADVENTURES

THE newspapers published during the War of 1812, granted even that they were vastly prejudiced of course, contained so much of thrilling interest, and so much that is now forgotten, that a complete file, for instance, of "Niles's Register" is a mine of wealth to a student of the times. Every week a stirring chapter was added to the records of Yankee ships and Yankee sailors. Fabulous sums were paid in prize money, fortunes were made often in a single venture.

One of the luckiest cruises of the war, so far as rich returns are concerned, was made by a little squadron of four vessels that sailed from Boston on October 8th under the command of Commodore Rogers. It consisted of the *President*, the *United States*, and the *Congress* frigates, and the *Argus* sloop of war. Five days after sailing the *United States* and the *Argus* became separated from the others in a gale of wind, and afterwards cruised on their own account. On the 15th, the *President* captured the British packet *Swallow*, having on board two hundred thousand dollars in specie—a rich haul, indeed.

On the 31st of the month, the *Congress* captured a South Sea ship loaded with oil that was being convoyed by an English frigate, the *Galatea;* the latter made off and left her consort to her fate. The *President*, on the 25th of October, captured the fine English frigate *Macedonian*, and sent her safely into New London harbor. After taking one or two smaller prizes, the *President* and *Congress* sailed into Boston the last of December, having covered over eight thousand miles. The landing of the money taken from the *Swallow* and the other prizes was made quite a function. It was loaded into several large drays, and escorted from the Navy Yard to the bank by the crews of the frigates and a detachment of marines, "drums beating and colors flying," as an old-time account has it. The gold dust and specie amounted to the value of three hundred thousand dollars, besides the value of the vessels taken.

But the little *Argus*, under the command of Captain Sinclair, had some adventures worth the telling, before she returned to port laden with the fruits of war. After parting company with the squadron, she laid her course for the coast of Brazil, then one of the most profitable cruising grounds, although the waters swarmed with British war vessels. From Cape St. Roque to Surinam she sailed and there made two prizes; thence she cruised through the

West Indies and hovered in the vicinity of the Bermudas; afterwards she went as far north as Halifax along the coast before she turned her head towards home.

The *Argus* must have been a nimble vessel, for, according to her logbook, she had escaped imminent capture a score of times, owing to her speed and capacity for sailing close on the wind. Once she had fallen in with a British squadron of six sail, two of them being ships of the line. For three days and nights they pursued her closely. One of the big fellows, proving to be a very fast sailer, outstripped the others, and twice was almost within gunshot. On the fourth day the *Argus* came up with a large English merchant ship about sunset. The wind had shifted so as to give her the windward gage of the pursuing battle-ship. In full sight of her, and of the others that were distant some ten or twelve miles, the *Argus* captured the merchantman; and, under cover of the dark, stormy night that shut down, she made her escape with her prize. After a cruise of ninety-six days, she put into the harbor of New York. The actual value of the prizes she had captured amounted to upwards of two hundred thousand dollars — more than enough to pay for her original cost three times over.

But to leave the deeds of the regular navy and take up those of a few of the private armed vessels:

less is known of their doings, of course; they should be given a separate volume to themselves in writing the history of our wars with England — and the volume is yet unwritten, but some day it may be. Bravely they fought, often against odds, and more than once they contributed to the defence of our coast in coöperation with the regular navy and the land forces. Take operations of the English blockading squadron under Admiral Warren that was sent to close up the waters of the Chesapeake. Many were the times that the privateers eluded his watch-dogs and sailed in and out through his fleet, and more than once did he have a chance to test their metal. The schooner *Lottery*, of Baltimore, mounting six guns and having a crew numbering but thirty-five, in February, 1813, was attacked by nine large British boats containing over two hundred and forty armed men. For an hour and a half the privateer stood them off, and before she was finally captured, she had killed more of the enemy than her own crew numbered! The privateer *Dolphin*, also hailing from Baltimore, was taken after the same heroic defence, and Admiral Warren must have found such work to be rather uncomfortable experience. The United States schooner *Asp*, three guns and twenty-one men, was pursued up a shallow creek by a detachment of boats from the English fleet; and, after beating off her pursuers for some time, she was

taken by superior numbers and upon her capture was set on fire. But the Americans, who had retreated to shore, returned and succeeded in extinguishing the flames and saving their vessel. A remarkable thing in connection with the presence of the English fleet in the Chesapeake was the attempt to blow up the flagship *Plantagenet* with a torpedo. The news that Americans were working upon such a line of invention had filled the English with dread and horror, they declared that any one captured while engaged in such a work would be hanged at once without a trial, for they denounced such methods of warfare as "crimes against humanity." But this did not deter an adventurous projector by the name of Mix from trying to rid the bay of its unwelcome visitors. For a long time he had been at work perfecting a "new explosive engine of great destructive powers," and on the 18th of July, at midnight, he dropped down with the tide alone in a small row-boat, and, when within forty fathoms of the *Plantagenet*, he put his torpedo into the water with the intention of having it drift with the tide athwart the flagship's bows. But an alert sentry on one of the guard boats discovered him and hailed; Mix drew his infernal machine into his boat and escaped. Every night for a week the inventor tried his luck, but was spied before he could complete his preparations, and was forced to draw off. But once he so

frightened the English officers that they made sail and shifted their anchorage, and upon another occasion the flagship let go a pell-mell broadside, and threw up rockets and blue lights to ascertain the whereabouts of the lone adventurer.

On the night of the 24th Mix came very near to accomplishing his purpose, and a contemporary printed account gives such a vivid description of it that it is well worth quoting: "When within one hundred yards the machine was dropped into the water, and at the same moment the sentinel cried, 'All's well,' the tide swept it towards the vessel, but it exploded a few seconds too soon. A column of water full fifty feet in circumference was thrown up thirty or forty feet. Its appearance was a vivid red tinged with purple at the sides. The summit of the column burst with a tremendous explosion, and fell on the deck of the *Plantagenet* in torrents, while she rolled into the yawning chasm below and nearly upset." Then the account shortly remarks, "She, however, received but little injury." But this early attempt at waging submarine warfare made the British exceedingly weary of anchoring in our ports, which was to our advantage.

But to leave this digression and return to the privateers again: justice has not been done them, as we have said. But to take the names of a few and tell of their experiences is perhaps a good idea.

Well known were they to the public eighty odd years ago. For instance, the schooner *Atlas*, of nineteen guns, that sailed from Philadelphia soon after war was declared with England — she was famous! Her captain's name was David Moffat, and he was a fearless commander and a "right good seaman." The *Chronicle* and the *Naval Temple*, published in 1816, give each a short account of one of his encounters with the enemy; to quote from the latter: —

"On the third of August at eight A.M., the *Atlas* discovered two sail, for which she bore away. At eleven o'clock the action was commenced with a broadside and musketry. She continued engaged with both ships till noon, when the smaller one struck her colors. The *Atlas* then directed the whole of her fire against the large ship, when the small one, although her colors were down, renewed her fire on the *Atlas*, which had to recommence firing on her; in a few minutes every man was driven from her decks. Twenty minutes past twelve the large ship struck. Possession was immediately taken of both of them. One proved to be the ship *Pursuit*, Captain Chivers, of four hundred and fifty tons, sixteen guns, and thirty-five men. The other was the ship *Planter*, Captain Frith, of two hundred and eighty tons, twelve guns, and fifteen men." They proved to be richly laden,

and with both of them in her wake the *Atlas* started for home; she had lost but two men killed and five wounded. The *Pursuit* arrived safe in port on the same day as the privateer, but the *Planter* was recaptured off the cape of the Delaware.

The privateer *Decatur* under command of Captain Divon, after a long and severe fight, captured a schooner of the English service that mounted fifteen guns — over twice as many as the *Decatur* carried. The *Saratoga* of New York, Captain Aderton, took the *Morgania*, a British packet of eighteen guns, off Surinam, and in the action both vessels were nearly dismantled. The *Comet*, of Baltimore, had a running fight with three English merchantmen and a Portuguese sloop of war; she beat off the latter, who officiously interfered, and compelled all three of the Englishmen to strike their colors. The *Young Eagle* took two British ships at once — one quite as large and as powerful as she was. The *Montgomery*, Captain Upton of Boston, mounting twelve guns, fought yard arm to yard arm with a fine sloop of war belonging to the English navy, mounting twenty guns. The *Surinam*, for that was her name, gave up the fight, and, much crippled, put in at Barbadoes. They were rare good fighters — these privateers.

But perhaps one of the strangest adventures was

that of the *Young Teazer* — what a saucy, impudent name for a vessel; but, according to account, it suited her to a nicety. Captain Dobson of New York was part owner and commander, and while cruising off Halifax he was chased by a large armed ship, the *Sir John Sherbroke.* As she kept gaining steadily, Dobson headed his own vessel straight for Halifax harbor; he passed the lighthouse, and as he did so hoisted up English colors over the American in order to lead his pursuer to suppose he was an English prize. As if in disgust at having wasted so much time, the *Sir John Sherbroke* hove about and put to sea, and as soon as she was at a safe distance, Dobson hauled down his misleading colors and did likewise, successfully escaping.

The journals of the time are crowded with adventures such as these, and the few here referred to have been selected merely at random. But they give an idea of the adventurous spirit and daring enterprise of the Yankee tars and captains.



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